# SCHOOL LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETIES

F. C. PRITCHARD

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GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
LONDON TORONTO BOMBAY SYDNEY

*First published* 1939
*by* George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd.
182 *High Holborn, London, W.C.*1

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MESTON TRAINING COLLEGE
MADRAS-14

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN. PRINTED BY J. AND J. GRAY, EDINBURGH

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# SCHOOL LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETIES

## CHAPTER I

# THE SCHOOL LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY

### I. Uses and Importance

A School Literary and Debating Society is not only desirable but necessary from an English master's point of view. English teaching to-day does not merely consist of the dull annotation of a number of set books. The pupil has to be taught not only how to write, for example, a précis, but why he should be able to write one; why he should attempt to acquire a taste for good literature. But the school is indeed fortunate whose time-table allows for more than one English period per day, if that. And in those five or six English periods each week it is impossible for any master to do all that he could wish. It is realized that a child nowadays should learn more than the mere expression of his ideas in writing. He should also be able to express those ideas orally. In the report on the *Teaching of English in England*, the Departmental Committee said, "Oral work is, we are convinced, the foundation upon which proficiency in the writing of English must be based." The Committee was, admittedly, referring to work *in* school, but most English teachers are all

too conscious of the lack of the necessary time for such oral work. Hence the importance of a Society which meets in out-of-school hours. Steps must be taken, however, to ensure that neither staff nor pupils regard the Society as a sort of annexe to the normal English periods. The meetings take place in the pupils' leisure time. Pupils attend voluntarily. The aim of those who organize the Society must be to make the programme so attractive that pupils will continue to attend voluntarily. Thus their powers will become enlarged in many directions, and there will be none of the feeling of 'swot' which must always attach itself to school-work to a certain extent. Any person will do much better that which he does of his own volition, than that which he does under compulsion.

Future employment may depend upon a youth's ability to think and speak coherently while standing before an employer or committee. Yet a vast number of young people to-day become strangely tongue-tied in such circumstances, and this is not merely due to nervousness. It is because they have never learnt to speak and think as accurately when upon their legs as when sitting at a desk. When I joined the staff of a certain school a few years ago, I organized a Literary and Debating Society. Previous to that the school had never possessed one. A year later a debate was arranged between this Society and the Old Boys' Association. I have forgotten the subject

of the debate, but I remember that I felt at the time that the Old Boys had a great advantage over the school. They had knocked about a bit; their experience was wider; and that was likely to make a difference in this particular debate. In the actual debate, however, although the school speakers' data was more limited, it was used with such effect—after only one year's training—that the Old Boys were utterly overwhelmed. The latter's ideas and thoughts, no doubt, were good; their utterance was futile. Their expressions were trite; their manner awkward and clumsy; their enunciation slurred and faulty. The school speakers were able to seize all the numerous debating chances which were given them.

A Literary and Debating Society is particularly desirable in a day-school. It has often been pointed out how difficult it is to make time for out-of-school activities in such schools—especially in those situated in country districts. Yet it is in these out-of-school societies that a boy or girl can receive much of his or her most valuable education. Dare one suggest that this may be due to the absence of the examination urge?

In a boarding-school pupils are compelled to mingle freely with one another. A schoolboy jargon and often a schoolboy intonation develops because of this compulsory intermingling. It may not be altogether a good thing, but at least it helps the boy to express himself, to conduct him-

self in a passable manner as a speaking member of society. The day-school lacks this advantage, and steps should be taken to ensure that children in these schools meet together for talk and discussion from time to time. So many of the pupils in these schools never learn how to speak. They pass their School Certificate examinations as successfully as pupils from one of the old-established public schools, but they never learn to express clearly in speech the thoughts which they can and do express in writing. A few pupils from each of such schools go up each year to one of the older universities. Their origin is known as soon as they open their mouths to speak. A Literary and Debating Society can eliminate this undesirable disadvantage—and there is no getting away from the fact that it is a disadvantage. The report on *Secondary Education* stated that English teaching should "lead to an ease in social relationships, a desire to know facts, and an ability to think clearly, which are essential elements in the education of the citizen of a democracy." Classroom teaching can attain something of this aim, but it cannot achieve it entirely. There simply is not time.

## II. The Officers of the Society

(*a*) President.
(*b*) Speaker or Chairman.
(*c*) Secretary.

(*d*) One elected representative from each form composing the Committee.

(*a*) The President will normally be the headmaster. This may be labelled a courtesy office and has little to do with the actual administration of the Society.

(*b*) The office of Speaker or Chairman, on the other hand, is a key office. In large schools where there is a large sixth form the office may be held by a boy who will be elected by a general meeting of the whole Society. It is his duty to take the chair at committee meetings and all other meetings of the Society. This, of course, means that he will occupy the chair at debates. Herein will be seen the disadvantage of letting a boy occupy the position. He will be debarred from taking sides in debate, and thus, for one session, he will miss one of the advantages of an ordinary member. For this reason, and this alone, I would suggest that it is wiser for a master to hold the office of Speaker. But—a word of warning to such staff Speakers—though the Speaker should guide the destinies of the Society, he should never dictate them. The boys themselves should take the initiative in choosing programmes and speakers, and on occasions the master should delegate his duties as Speaker to a boy.

When there are several boys capable of acting as Speakers, it is a good plan to allow them to occupy the chair in turn, so that each gets ex-

perience of a Chairman's duties. It is not possible, however, for all such Chairmen to be members of the Committee, and I would suggest that a permanent Chairman or Speaker should be elected (master or boy) who takes the chair at all committee-meetings, but delegates his task to others for certain meetings of the whole Society.

(*c*) The Secretary should always be a boy.[1] It is unnecessary, or should be, to add that he should be conscientious, with all his wits about him. His chief task, of course, will be the keeping of minutes, which must be done at each meeting, and looking after the preparations for meetings.

(*d*) The Speaker, Secretary, and representatives from each form constitute the Committee. The form representatives will be elected by their respective forms. A general meeting may make suggestions as to the programme for each session, but it will be for the Committee to sift these suggestions and to draw up the final programme.

Membership will normally be confined to senior forms, though I feel that it is a good practice to invite other members of the school to certain meetings, *e.g.*, to a lecture by some authority on art, literature, or state affairs, or to a well-staged mock trial.

The question whether members of the staff should attend meetings is a thorny one. Personally, I feel that the staff should be free to attend,

[1] Throughout these pages, when the word 'boy' is used, it should be understood that 'girl' could equally well apply.

and that on certain occasions they should make a point of attending. The fact that the staff are interested in the Society's doings will be an encouragement to the boys. They should not, however, speak at debates, nor interfere in meetings, for the Society will only be successful if, and when, it feels that it is running itself, and is actually doing so.

## III. Choosing the Programmes

In reading school magazines, one sometimes reads glowing accounts of three or four meetings of the Debating Society which have occurred during the term. This is ridiculous. Why have a Society if that Society does not meet regularly? There should be one meeting each week of the term, and the programme for each meeting should be drawn up and published on the school notice-board at the beginning of each term. When necessary more detailed notices of individual meetings can be posted a few days before the meeting concerned. This means that the Committee should draw up its programme at the end of the preceding term. It is a platitude to say that nothing worth doing can be done in a hurry, but school societies tend to forget it.

Programmes should be as varied as possible. It is hoped that the following pages may suggest ideas. When I was at school, the Senior Literary and Debating Society varied its programme very

little. It consisted entirely of Sharp Practices, formal Debates, papers by members—occasionally—and lectures by outsiders or members of the staff. The latter provided a certain amount of change. But a spirit of experiment and therefore of achievement was lacking, and the majority of the meetings left us in a state of boredom.

To achieve the maximum of success, an individual or a Society must be prepared to break new ground. There must be a spirit of initiative which is not confined to one or two members, but which is shared by the whole Society. At the same time, continuity is essential. Minutes of the previous meeting should be read at the commencement of each meeting—even though a Cabinet Minister is the speaker—and these should be approved and signed by the Chairman before the business of the evening begins.

We cannot all be equally interested in the same things, and though a Debate may be popular with one section of a Society, it will not be greeted enthusiastically by another. There must, therefore, be variety. At the same time a watchful eye should be kept on members who attend only the meetings with attractive titles and are absent from the others. It is no good bullying such members. In fact, it is not only no good; it is disastrous. A Literary and Debating Society has among its aims the instilling of a love of literature, and the gaining of experience in speaking and thinking. This interest and experience cannot

be pushed into a person. 'Gentle insinuation' would be a better term for what ought to happen. A little tact and boundless enthusiasm and encouragement on the part of the master or masters who help to guide the Society are what is necessary.

The following programmes are taken from the minute book of a Debating Society:

(i) (1937)

FIRST WEEK: (*Whole school invited.*) Mock Trial, when Roger Clack was indicted for murder.

SECOND WEEK: Lecture: "Life in Homeric Greece."

THIRD WEEK: Debate: "That England should adopt an isolationist policy with regard to the Spanish War."

FOURTH WEEK: Papers, followed by informal discussion.

"Why we want a dictator."

"My dislike for modern poetry."

"The sloppiness of the modern novel."

FIFTH WEEK: Play-reading: "The Rehearsal," by Maurice Baring. (*Followed by a short discussion on the acting profession throughout the ages.*)

SIXTH WEEK: No meeting, but a rehearsal of procedure for introducing a Private Member's Bill next week.

SEVENTH WEEK: Private Member's Bill: "That the use of cosmetics should be made illegal."

EIGHTH WEEK: Paper by member of staff, followed by discussion. "This Spineless Age!"

NINTH WEEK: Sharp Practice. [Out of this arose a subject which took the place of the Debate organized for next week.]

TENTH WEEK: Debate: "That England needs more initiative."

ELEVENTH WEEK: Play-reading: "The Price of Coal," by Harold Brighouse.

TWELFTH WEEK: Sharp Practice.

(ii) (1938)

FIRST WEEK: Sharp Practice.

SECOND WEEK: Debate: "That the British Empire is a great force for world peace."

THIRD WEEK: Literary Test Match.

FOURTH WEEK: Papers and informal discussion.

"Co-education."

"Why should film-producers change story plots?"

"Poetry in schools."

FIFTH WEEK: The Police Court, Little Dish. (*Little Dish is an imaginary small town where various curious happenings occur. The M.P. for the division in which Little Dish is situated introduces a Private Member's Bill sometimes; there are ructions on the Town Council, whereby we are enabled to study local government; and there are various Police and County Court cases.*)

SIXTH WEEK: Debate: "That sex-equality is impossible."

SEVENTH WEEK: Lecture: "J. M. Barrie."

EIGHTH WEEK: Debate: "That homework should be abolished."

NINTH WEEK: Play-reading: "Riders to the Sea," by J. M. Synge. (*Followed by a short discussion about Irish literature.*)

TENTH WEEK:<br>ELEVENTH WEEK: } No meetings, owing to the production of a Shakespearean play by the School.

TWELFTH WEEK: Christmas Anthology.

(iii) (1939)

FIRST WEEK: Business Meeting, including a talk by a member of staff on "Literary and Debating Societies."

SECOND WEEK: Debate: "That girls spend their leisure time more profitably than boys."

[The school in which this debate took place was co-educational. It was interesting to note, however, that certain of the boys spoke against themselves, as did the girls also.]

THIRD WEEK: Rehearsal for next week.

FOURTH WEEK: Mock Trial: James Duncan is indicted for the murder of one Thomas Robinson.

FIFTH WEEK: A Literary Test Match, organized between three Houses.

SIXTH WEEK: Papers: "Struggle for Existence."

(*a*) In pre-historic times.
(*b*) A land-labourer of 1550 speaks.
(*c*) Jesuit priest, 1600.
(*d*) The chimney-sweep grows up, 1808.
(*e*) A great land-owner in England worries (1939).
(*f*) A small shop-keeper of County Durham (1939).

(*Chairman: One of the members.*)

SEVENTH WEEK: Debate: "That moral rearmament alone can save civilization."

EIGHTH WEEK: Play-reading: "Joan the Maid," by Herman Ould. (*Produced by a junior member.*)

NINTH WEEK: After-dinner Speeches.

TENTH WEEK: Sharp Practice.

ELEVENTH WEEK: Literary Papers, on topics chosen by readers, each followed by informal discussion.

TWELFTH WEEK: "Spring Anthology." (*By special request, owing to the success of the previous "Anthology" meeting.*)

## IV. Membership

Each member of the School Literary and Debating Society should feel that it is a privilege to be a member. He can never feel that when a member of the staff has continually to cajole members of the Society into attending meetings —and that is not an unheard-of thing.

Every member might be compelled, however, to write an essay, a poem, a story, or some other literary effort, and to give this to the Society as his annual subscription. These literary articles should reach a certain standard, and if any article fails to reach that standard the writer should be asked to offer another. In the event of a second failure, the writer should be suspended, temporarily, at any rate, from the Society. Where such a case arises the whole Committee will vote on the matter. This procedure may sound drastic. It is. But such insistence on the attainment of a certain standard makes membership of the Society an object worth attaining, worth working for, like membership of the 1st XI or XV. The Literary and Debating Society will achieve a dignity in school which it would lack if membership were free and if members could merely please themselves. There are, it is true, pupils whose standard of English is poor, yet who are genuinely

keen on that and kindred subjects. Such pupils will be known to the staff, and, if necessary, a lowering of the required standard may be permitted in the individual case. It is found, though, that most of the would-be members who fail to reach the standard are not the dull pupils, but those who are lazy and who dash off their article in a few minutes, careless of spelling, punctuation, and handwriting. When handed in, the article speaks for itself. It shows that the writer had not even taken the trouble to read through what he had written.

As has been implied above, these articles will be hand-written. When they have all been collected by the Secretary they will be bound and placed in the school library where anyone can consult them.

Some schools demand a literary contribution of this nature, but require the author to read it before a meeting of the Society. There is no need here to point out the difficulties of this. The matter is dealt with later, in the chapter on Lectures. One would suggest, however, that there ought to be some condition of membership. The boy who is not willing to show himself worthy of membership ought not to become a member. Those who write an article feel that membership is not cheap, and is therefore worth working for.

CHAPTER II

# LECTURES

(i) Should there be any lectures at all?

(ii) If so, should these lectures be given by persons unconnected with the school, or by pupils or members of the staff?

At any meeting where the programme for a term is being arranged, some one will suggest that Mr So-and-so be asked to lecture. This suggestion is acclaimed until some one else says, "Yes, but what about Mr Thingummijig?" Every one then feels that he certainly ought to be asked. And so it goes on. A lecture is the easiest meeting to arrange. Is that why many of us show a large number of lectures on our programmes? If so, then let us abolish all lectures from the Society's programme.

A full-length lecture (*i.e.*, one lasting about forty-five minutes) by a member of the Society would probably do that member good. It is not so certain that it would do the audience good. Unless the lecturer has a flair for public speaking and the ability to sense the atmosphere and so adapt himself to the audience, it is better that lectures of this sort should not be arranged.

Frequently, too, one finds members of the staff lecturing to Literary and Debating Societies. A

few of them do it excellently, probably because they undertake a certain amount of public speaking in their leisure hours. A few will demonstrate that they are even worse at lecturing than at teaching. A large number will imagine themselves once more in the classroom, but on this occasion they are conscious that they can speak all the time and need not worry about the eating of sweets or inattention. In any case, don't pupils hear enough of their masters' voices in school ?

To sum up: beware, firstly, of full-length lectures by boy members of the Society, and, secondly, of lectures by members of the school staff.

Similar remarks may be made about outside lecturers. One sometimes finds that parents of members of the Society offer their services as lecturers. If this happens—beware! The boy or girl may do his or her best to dissuade the would-be lecturer, but he may fail! There may be some recognized authority on a special subject living in the district—an author or dramatist, perhaps. If he or she is a good speaker, and can be persuaded to spare the necessary time, then a lecture may well be arranged, but in such a case—where the lecturer is something of a celebrity—it is advisable, perhaps, to make the meeting an open one and to invite any members of the school who care to attend. But when this is done, the normal procedure should be followed; *i.e.*, the minutes

of the previous meeting should be read and signed before proceeding with the immediate business.

One point is often overlooked: A lecture of this type offers a chance to members of the Society to practise extempore speeches—perhaps even to make a maiden speech—for before the meeting opens arrangements should have been made for a member to propose, and for another to second, a vote of thanks to the lecturer.

In spite of the opening remarks of this section, lectures are not to be condemned altogether. Above, we were considering, primarily, full-length lectures of about forty-five minutes' duration. Pupils at school, even sixth-formers, are not capable of speaking coherently for such a time, but they *are* capable of speaking for five minutes or so, and such speaking is to be encouraged. Twelve such lectures or speeches *could* be given in one hour. One pities the audience at the close, for obviously twelve lectures, each complete in itself, delivered one after the other, will be terribly boring. There must, then, be some means of introducing variety into the programme. Following is a suggestion for a meeting in which five-minute lectures by members are the chief item:

(i) The Chairman, or Speaker, calls upon the Secretary to read the minutes of the previous meeting, after which, with the approval of the meeting, he signs them as correct.

(ii) The Chairman calls upon Mr A to lecture upon, say, "A Buccaneer of 1600."

(iii) With a few introductory remarks, the Chairman asks Mr B to lecture upon "Gangsters, 1930." Here we have two lectures one after the other, but with the subjects balanced so that there is continuity.

(iv) At this point the Chairman might make a few remarks concerning crime and its history. He will then introduce the next subject which, he warns the Society, will be followed by a short discussion. Mr C is then called upon to lecture on "Slum-clearance."

(v) The Chairman might select certain references from this lecture which would have the effect of provoking varied opinions so that an informal discussion develops, lasting about ten minutes.

(vi) Three lectures follow, dealing with similar themes and interspersed with remarks by the Chairman. These lectures might deal with three modern poets or with three poets each representative of certain literary periods.

(vii) When the lectures are finished, the Chairman asks if there is any other business. If there is not, he declares the meeting closed.

A programme such as the above will last about forty-five minutes, it will give practice to six members in lecturing, and should be interesting to the audience. With a little care taken in the arrangement of the programme boredom will disappear. Indeed, in any kind of meeting, it is usually bad arrangements and lack of foresight and preparation which cause the boredom so often, unfortunately, seen in societies of any description.

In considering the question of membership, it was suggested that each member should make some literary contribution. Ideally, these contributions should be read aloud by the writer at meetings of the Society, for by such means the proud author will soon be conscious of whether he has a right to be proud, or whether it would be better for him to hide his face! Unfortunately, the reading of some of the contributions is not practicable. Their length forbids it, and to impose a strict limit on their length would cramp the writers' style too much. On the other hand, it is possible to condense some of the articles and to present their leading ideas orally in a two-, three-, or five-minute lecturette. This is valuable in that it compels pupils to select only essentials—and to see that there are some essentials to select!

The Secretary has to take minutes of such a meeting. His task is no enviable one. But members can help him and do much good to themselves,

if they hand to the Secretary a very short précis (not more than fifty words) of their lecturette. The Secretary is saved much trouble, while the members themselves have practice in selecting what they consider the chief points.

If, in spite of the remarks made above, some member of the staff or of the Literary and Debating Society is brave enough to give a lecture on a literary topic, such as, for example, "Robert Louis Stevenson," it is a good idea to get various boys or girls to read extracts of prose or poetry illustrating the lecture. In the lecture suggested above a quartette from the Musical Society might be persuaded to sing "Over the Sea to Skye." Other members might read poems, such as the "Dedication" to *A Child's Garden of Verses*, "The Vagabond," or "A Song of the Road," while "Requiem" makes an ideal epilogue to the lecture. Other members might read extracts from letters or prose works. The criticism made about such a mode of lecturing is that the continuity is broken. Surely that depends upon the lecturer? It will be broken if he merely selects one or two poems and prose extracts and gets others to read them, and makes no attempt to link up what he has to say with what others have to read. But a lecturer with any experience at all will see to it that the continuity is not broken, and that the whole lecture is balanced.

Subjects for lectures of any length in a Literary and Debating Society are varied and numerous.

The following titles have been culled from the minutes of various Societies, and give some indication of this:

The Sea in English Literature.
A Tour in Nazi Germany.
The Devil.
Rhythm in English Poetry.
The Written Word.
Blake as a Universal Genius.
The Search for the Soul.
The Greek Athletic Ideal.
Costumes and Scenery for Small Stages.
The Nonsense of A. A. Milne.
The Influence of Wireless on Language.

CHAPTER III

# PAPERS BY MEMBERS

PAPERS differ from lectures in that they are read, whereas a lecture is—or should be—delivered direct to the audience, brief notes helping the speaker to adhere to his subject. A lecturer who has personality and is accustomed to speaking in public can hold the attention even of a youthful audience for an hour or so. The mere reader can never do this unless his reading-matter is unusually absorbing, as a story is. The power of the spoken word is so much greater than the power of the read word. This explains why some of the sermons which one hears in churches are so dull—they are read. The lecturer gets inside the minds of his audience by watching faces, by sensing 'atmosphere.' The reader has his face intent upon the printed word. The one is personal, the other is impersonal. In considering papers, therefore, one must remember that they should be short, and they should be made as interesting as possible. The experienced writer of such papers will put into his script occasional thoughts or phrases which startle or challenge his hearers. As far as school Societies are concerned, five to ten minutes is ample for any one paper.

Papers may be divided into two main classes:

(i) Those which are to be followed by a discussion.

(ii) Those which are not.

(i) These papers must, obviously, open up avenues to discussion, a fact which is often not appreciated by boys and girls. They choose some literary topic, such as "Modern Poetry." With the help of reference books they compose a paper which may or may not be interesting, but is a mere statement of fact. It is advisable, therefore, for the Speaker, if he is a member of the staff or for some other experienced person, to give a few hints, to show that the paper should treat the selected subject from one point of view, while showing at the same time that this is not necessarily the only, or even the correct, view. It is these other points of view which will be expressed by other members in the discussion which follows. As an example of what I mean it may be helpful if I give the titles of papers which have been given in a school and which have aroused no feeling, no ideas, and which were therefore followed by no discussion, though it was intended that they should be:

The Organ Voice of Milton.
The Elizabethan Lyric.
The Debt of Drama to Christopher Marlowe.
Chaucer's Genius.

These are suitable topics for essays or for exam-

ination questions, but not for provoking argument. On the other hand, the following papers did arouse strong feelings which had to be expressed. So keen was the interest aroused by the second paper that a debate was arranged at a subsequent meeting on the same topic.

"This Poetry of 1939." (The reader of the paper did not like the poetry and stated very emphatically his reasons.)

"Dictatorships." (The reader presented all the pros and none of the cons.)

"The Value of reading Drama." (As we listened, we *knew* that there was a great deal of good to be got from reading drama, but the reader tried to show otherwise and that, naturally, made us wish to argue with him.)

Once make it clear that papers of this sort should excite criticism, even angry feelings, and the Society will discover that it contains many speakers!

(ii) Papers which are not to be followed by any discussion are much easier to write. There are literally thousands of possible subjects, but, whatever subject is chosen, the reader should try to approach it from an original angle, which will catch the attention of the audience and, if need be, wake them up!

A review of some book can be made a most interesting literary paper, while, at the same time, the preparation of such a review will give valuable training in the ~~use of the~~ critical faculty. Some people turn down the idea of book reviews,

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saying that unless the review deals with a new book it is uninteresting and useless. Are all our pupils so well read? A book which may be 'old' to the blasé schoolmaster or schoolmistress may prove to be a most exciting find to the pupil. I well remember the thrill with which I first read Ballantyne's *Coral Island.* I was young then, and the thrill was all the greater because it was the first real book I had ever bought with money which I had saved up for the purpose. The thrill of the buying of one's first book cannot be repeated, but the thrill of reading a new type of book or of being introduced to an author who is new to us—even though the introduction takes the form of a book published twenty-five years ago—can be repeated. Strange to say, it was after I had left school that I first made the acquaintance of Richard Hannay and the other characters which John Buchan has created. But then again I felt the thrill of a new discovery, and —thank Heaven!—I can still get such thrills. When one is thrilled and interested in this way, one usually wants to tell other people about it. Why should not this desire be utilized sometimes in the preparation of programmes for the School Literary and Debating Society? A paper on *Robinson Crusoe* may not be interesting; a paper on A. J. Cronin's *The Stars Look Down,* simply because it has already interested the reader and has probably not been read by any of the hearers, will prove immensely interesting.

Probably the writing of reviews of books and films will have been dealt with in English lessons. There is, therefore, no need to deal at length here with the dangers. Most boys or girls, writing a review for the first time, proceed to tell the story of the book or film. In other words, they may make a brief précis of it. This may be good exercise in précis-writing, but it is not a review. Writers should be warned against giving too much away and so of taking away interest from the book itself.

CHAPTER IV

# DEBATES

## Suggested Procedure

(i) The Chairman or Speaker opens the meeting by calling upon the Secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting.

(ii) After obtaining the approval of the meeting the Chairman signs these minutes as correct. He then asks the Proposer to put the motion for Debate.

(iii) The Proposer states the subject of Debate and gives his reasons for introducing it.

(iv) The Opposer replies.

(v) The proposal and opposition respectively will be seconded.

(vi) The Chairman declares the Debate open.

(vii) Any member may speak for or against the motion. According to the strict rules of formal Debate a member should not speak twice, unless to correct some error made either by another speaker or by himself, or to reply to a question. (In school debates, where members are timorous about speaking at all, this rule should not be enforced.)

(viii) Each speaker should commence his speech

formally: "Mr Chairman (or Speaker), (Ladies and) Gentlemen. ." (This is a formality sometimes considered unnecessary, but it is of great assistance in the maintenance of dignity in the meeting.)

(ix) When time is up or when all have said what they wished to say and it has been proposed that the vote be taken, the Chairman asks the Opposer to sum up his case. Afterwards, the Proposer will sum up his case.

N.B.—These two speeches should be summaries of points which have been made and not the presentation of new views.

(x) The Chairman, as concisely and impartially as possible, sums up the Debate, ending by reminding members of the exact terms of the motion.

(xi) The vote is taken, usually by show of hands, though it is useful occasionally to accustom members to the vote by ballot.

## The Chairman

The Chairman—

(*a*) is all-powerful. His decision is final.
(*b*) must rigidly keep speakers to the point.
(*c*) is responsible for the maintenance of order.
(*d*) has a casting vote which he may use in the event of a tie.

(*e*) decides who shall speak first, if two or more speakers rise to speak at the same time.

## Subjects for Debate

It seems hardly necessary to mention one matter, yet many boys and girls, especially when choosing subjects for debate in Sharp Practices, forget that a Debate must have two sides to it! For example, at a recent Sharp Practice the following subject was suggested: "That all schools should be equipped with gymnasiums." Is there any one who would argue that all schools should not be thus equipped? Members of a Society should be warned to make sure that opinion is going to be divided on any topic they may suggest.

Here are some subjects which should provide argument: That—

(i) it is better to be alone on a moor than alone in a city.

(ii) the English system of spelling is antiquated and should be reformed.

(iii) where there is a will, there is a way.

(iv) the press and propaganda cause most modern international difficulties.

(v) practical experience is better than knowledge gleaned from books.

(vi) knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers.

(vii) reality plays a more important part in literature than imagination.

(viii) now is the time.
(ix) sex equality is impossible.
(x) selfishness is the root of all evil.
(xi) broadcasting has a pernicious effect upon home life.
(xii) capital punishment should be abolished.
(xiii) bicycles should be licensed.
(xiv) every large provincial town should have a state-supported theatre.
(xv) the dramatist is made, not born.
(xvi) the aim of dramatists since 1914 has been to entertain and not to educate.
(xvii) the children of to-day are happier than those of one hundred years ago.
(xviii) the best school has the fewest rules.
(xix) school traditions serve no useful purpose and should be eliminated.
(xx) keeping children in after school hours serves no useful purpose.
(xxi) elementary domestic science should be taught to boys as well as to girls.
(xxii) girls spend their leisure time more profitably than boys.
(xxiii) science hinders civilization by destroying creative instincts.
(xxiv) specialization in industry makes for inefficiency.
(xxv) the craftsman has no place in modern industry.
(xxvi) modern inventions have made the housewife lazy.

(xxvii) talking pictures have a greater influence than wireless.
(xxviii) the machine is master of man.
(xxix) education is made too easy to-day.
(xxx) there should be greater control over the production of fiction.

CHAPTER V

# SHARP PRACTICES

Such a title hardly seems to belong to a Literary Society! Possibly it was coined in some school Debating Society by an unwilling speaker, for the term means 'a series of short debates.'

PROCEDURE

(i) Each member is given a slip of paper on which he or she writes a subject for debate, *e.g.*, "That television will destroy the popularity of the cinema."

(ii) These papers, folded and numbered, are collected and shuffled, after which they are redistributed.

(iii) The Chairman calls out a number, and the member holding the paper thus numbered rises and speaks on the motion proposed in his paper.

(The normal rule is that papers shall not be opened and looked at until the number is called. In schools it is wise to waive this rule, as a forewarned and prepared member will be more willing to speak than one who is surprised at short notice.)

(iv) After the motion has been introduced, other

members may speak for or against, as in an ordinary debate. In fact, the rules of formal debate are followed, except that there is no summing up by the proposer and opposer at the close.

(v) A time-limit should be imposed by the Chairman, both on individual speakers and on the debate as a whole. When the vote has been taken and the result announced, another number is called and a new subject introduced.

(vi) It frequently happens in Sharp Practices that the motion proposed is either an impossible subject on which to debate (school children have their sense of humour!), or that the motion meets with such general approval that no opposition is forthcoming. For example, the proposal "That all schools should be equipped with a gymnasium" finds no opponents to-day. When such motions appear, it is usual for some member to propose that the motion be not debated upon. Failing this, then the Chairman can point out the difficulty and pass on to another number.

In a meeting of one hour it should be possible to debate upon at least six subjects. If, as frequently happens, a subject is proposed which arouses keen general interest, a note should be made by the Secretary of the Society and that

subject can be debated upon on a later occasion in full debate.

In view of the brevity of each debate in a Sharp Practice, it is advisable that humorous or nonsensical subjects should be proposed. This may not develop intellectual ability, but it certainly develops speaking-ability. Members who are consciously trying to speak in a humorous vein often employ rhetorical figures of speech unconsciously—bathos, antithesis, irony. Incidentally, an English master can frequently pick up some useful examples of figures of speech, which can afterwards be used in the classroom. Such examples will be far more useful than those found in text-books, simply because the boys realize that they themselves created them.

The following flippant topics have been successfully used in Sharp Practices:

(i) That one should say it with pink roses rather than with white.

(ii) That Father Christmas sleeps with his beard under the sheet and not over the sheet.

(iii) That there is a greater similarity between cows and human beings than between parrots and human beings.

## CHAPTER VI

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

As a change from an ordinary formal debate, it is both interesting and valuable to clothe the discussion in the guise of a Parliamentary Debate. In this way, members of the Society will gain a living interest in the working of our democratic government to an extent impossible by other means. I have been surprised at the ignorance shown by sixth-form boys about the working of government.

Following is a summary of the normal procedure for the passing of a Bill. It matters not whether the Bill is presented by a Cabinet Minister or by a private member. The procedure is similar in either case. For the sake of clarity the matter may be divided into six parts.

(i) At the end of question time, the Member who is to introduce the Bill rises and asks permission of the House to introduce his Bill. The Speaker seeks the consent of the House, and the query will normally be greeted by a chorus of 'Ayes.' The Member then walks to the Bar of the House with a paper in his hand. The Speaker calls the name of the Member. If he is a Minister he will be given his official status, *e.g.*, the President of the Board of Education. Then the

Member says, "A Bill, sir!" The Speaker requests the Member to bring up his Bill, which is placed on the table before the Speaker and its title read by the Chief Clerk. The Bill has then been received by the House. Another Member moves that the Bill be read the first time. During the next few days copies of the Bill are printed and circulated among Members.

(ii) Some days later, the Member who first introduced the Bill will propose that the Bill be read a second time, and this motion will be seconded. A general debate follows, and it is this discussion which will normally decide the Bill's fate. When Members who wish to speak for or against the Bill have made their speeches, the proposer moves that the question be put. What is known as a Division then takes place.

SPEAKER: The House will vote on the motion that the Honourable Member be allowed to read his Bill for the second time. As many as are of that opinion will say 'Ay.'

THOSE IN FAVOUR: Ay.

SPEAKER: The contrary—'No.'

OPPOSITION: No.

SPEAKER: I think the 'Ayes' have it.

Members join in acclamation or the opposite. There is frequently a great deal of doubt, especially when the Bill has attracted considerable attention. In such cases the Speaker will say: "Clear the Lobbies!" Policemen in the corridors shout, "Division!" Bells are rung to announce

the fact. At the end of two minutes, during which time those who wish to vote have taken their place in the House, the Speaker says: "I think the 'Noes' have it."

REPLY: The 'Ayes' have it!
SPEAKER: 'Ayes' to the right; 'Noes' to the left!

The Speaker names two Tellers, one from each side of the House, and for this task the two chief Whips are traditionally chosen. The Members leave the House, passing into one of the two Division Lobbies. The entrance to the 'Ayes'' Lobby is behind the Speaker's chair, that to the 'Noes'' Lobby is at the opposite end of the House. In each of the Lobbies sits a Clerk, who records the vote of each Member passing his table. The two Tellers check the numbers, and at the end of ten minutes the votes are recorded and the Tellers go up to the Clerks' table in the House and give in their numbers. When the numbers have been recorded the Clerk hands the paper to the Teller of the winning side. Both Tellers stand before the Speaker, bow to him, and the winning Teller reads:

Ayes to the right, 367; Noes to the left, 233.

There are cheers from the winning side.

(iii) The Bill next has to pass through the Report stage, which means that a Committee of, say, fifty Members examines the Bill clause by clause, some of its members defending its terms, others attempting to pull it to pieces. This may take several weeks, at the end of which time the

Chairman of the Committee reports to the Speaker that his Committee has examined the Bill and made any necessary alterations.

(iv) The Member who first introduced the Bill proposes that the Bill be read the third time. A debate follows, ending again probably in a Division.

(v) Having passed its third reading in the House of Commons, the Bill passes to the House of Lords, where it goes through similar stages, and further amendments may be made which have to be referred back to the House of Commons.

(vi) When agreement has finally been reached, the Royal Assent to the Bill has to be obtained. To-day this is never refused, but it is still intimated to the Lords and Commons by means of a quaint ceremony in the House of Lords. Three men dressed in scarlet and ermine enter, the middle one being the Lord Chancellor. The Lords rise and the three men sit on the red couch in front of the Royal thrones, placing upon their heads the cocked hats which they have been holding. The Lord Chancellor speaks to Black Rod (the messenger between the Lords and Commons): "Let the Commons know that the Lords desire their immediate attendance in this place without delay." Black Rod goes out to summon the Commons and after a time they enter, with the Speaker in the foreground. The Lord Chancellor explains that the Royal Assent to certain Acts (or Act) has been given. The Chief Clerk rises

to read a statement announcing that the three lords have been asked to act on the King's behalf and that His Majesty has given his consent to certain Acts. Two Clerks stand, one at each end of their table. The one on the right reads out the title of each Act; the one on the left replies, "Le roy le veult." Or "Soit fait comme il est désiré."

When the Bill, or Bills, have in this way formally received the King's assent, the Mace is carried out and the Bill has become a law of the country.

The following books will be found useful and should be available in the school library :

K. Gibberd: *The People's Government.* Chapters II, VI, VII. (Dent.)
J. R. Peddie: *The British Citizen.* Chapter IV. (Blackie.)
C. S. S. Higham: *The Good Citizen.* Chapter XX. (Longmans, Green and Co.)
Sir C. P. Ilbert: *Parliament.* (Williams and Norgate.)

Obviously it is impossible in a school Society to stage the various readings of the Bill, the Divisions, etc. The foregoing outline is, in fact, given in the briefest possible space, and there must, in certain circumstances, be slight variations. It is enough to frighten any Society! But an interesting and instructive debate can be staged round the second reading. In schools where typewriting is taught, the foregoing outline of the stages in a Bill's history might well be

duplicated and distributed to members of the Society previous to the Debate, just as the Orders are distributed to Members of Parliament each Thursday, giving the agenda for the following week.

The Debating Society with which I am best acquainted has, from time to time, undertaken a debate in which the hall where meetings are held is converted into a pseudo House of Commons. Such Bills as the following have been debated upon:

"That cycles should be registered and should carry number plates."

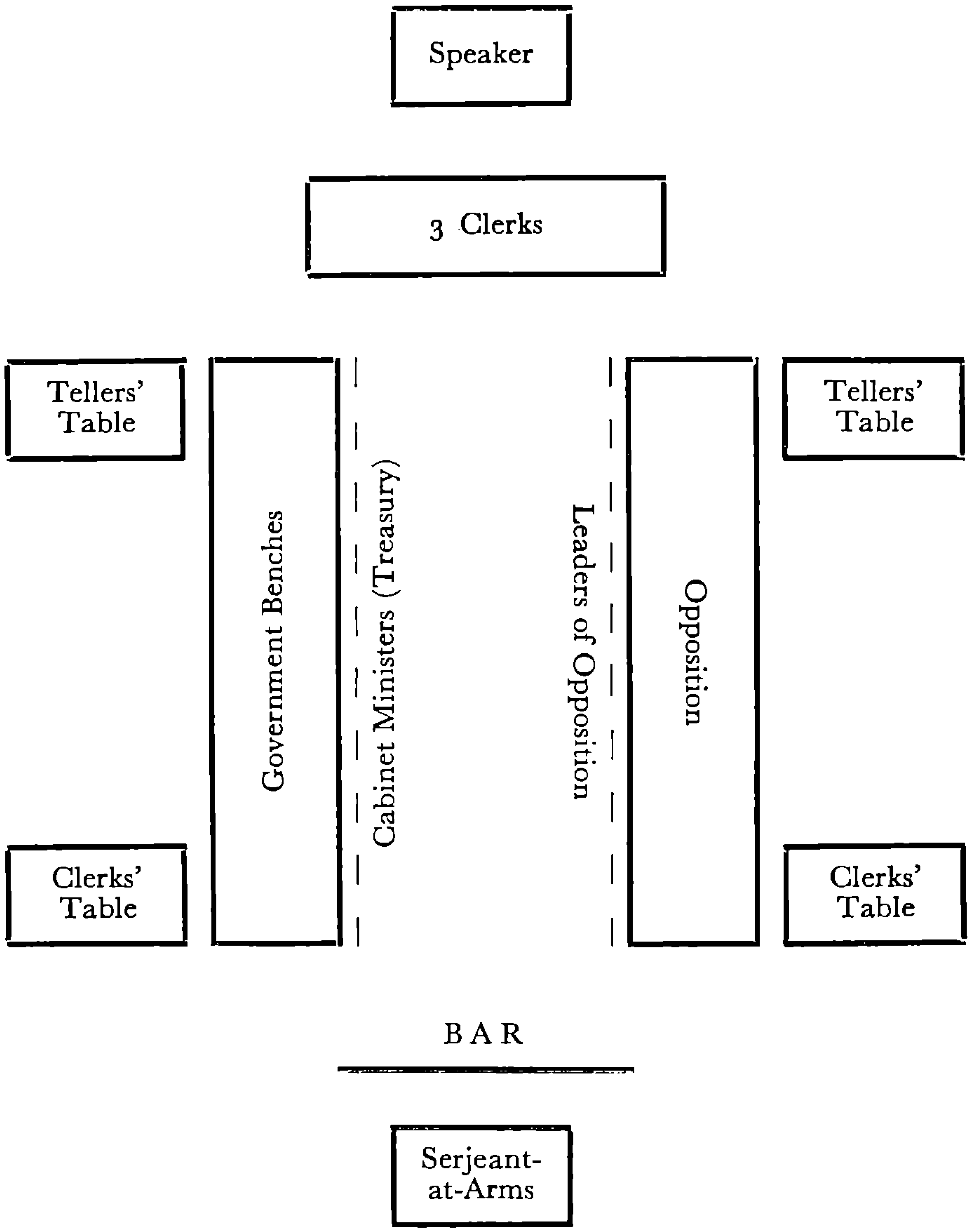
"That homework should be abolished in all day-schools."

"That there should be a more rigid system of Press censorship."

On these occasions a certain form of debate has been observed, and it may be helpful to other Societies to give an outline of this procedure.

The Government and Opposition Benches consist of long tables set end to end, in front of which are chairs for the leaders of each side, and behind which are chairs for other members. The space between these tables and the walls of the hall forms the Division Lobbies, while at the end of each of these a small table can be set for the Clerks and Tellers recording members' votes. The Bar consists of a red chalk-line drawn across the floor.

## Procedure for a Mock House of Commons Debate



MEMBER: Sir, honourable members, I beg leave to introduce a Bill.

SPEAKER: Is it the wish of this House that the Bill be read?

ALL: Ay.

(*Member walks to Bar, carrying a paper, on which is written the title of the Bill. He stands facing the Speaker.*)

SPEAKER: The honourable member for So-and-so.

MEMBER: A Bill, sir.

SPEAKER: It is our wish that you bring the Bill up.

(*Member comes forward, puts paper on table, and stands to one side.*

*The Chief Clerk reads the title of the Bill.*

*Member returns to his seat and makes a speech introducing the Bill.*)

A general debate follows. A maiden speech (real or otherwise) may well be introduced, while the suspension of some unruly member adds interest and drama to the debate!

When all who wish to speak have had their say, or when the allotted time for the debate is nearly complete, the following takes place:

MEMBER: I move that the question be now put.

SPEAKER: The motion before the House: (*For example*) 'That the use of cosmetics be made illegal.' As many as are of that opinion will say 'Ay.'

THOSE IN FAVOUR: Ay!

SPEAKER: The contrary?

OPPOSITION: No!

SPEAKER: I think the 'Ayes' have it.

OPPOSITION: The 'Noes' have it.

SPEAKER: Clear the Lobbies. The Honourable Member for —— will act as Teller for the Government; the Honourable Member for —— will act as Teller for the Opposition.

(*Members get up from their places, those in favour of the motion passing behind the tables on the right of the Speaker; those of the opposition passing behind the tables on the left of the Speaker. All record their vote at the Clerks' table near the Bar. When all have voted these Clerks take their numbers to the Tellers waiting at the other end of the Lobby, while Members return to their places in the House.*)

The Tellers enter and walk up to the Clerks' table, where they hand in their numbers on paper. The Chief Clerk returns the paper to the winning side's Teller, whereat cheers will arise from that party, for the members will have been watching this procedure. The Tellers then stand in front of the table, facing the Speaker. They bow to him, and the winning Teller loudly reads the record of the voting. Cheers and boos from winners and losers respectively.

With the Sergeant-at-Arms leading with the Mace, and followed by the Speaker and the Clerks, the assembly breaks up.

The above procedure has been found workable in school Societies, but it is very obvious that it differs considerably from the true procedure in

the House of Commons. This should be made clear to the boys. They should be shown that their debate only represents a part of the normal Parliamentary procedure, and that the passing of an English Law is a long and tedious process, ensuring the exploration of every contingency.

CHAPTER VII

# MOCK TRIALS AND OTHER LEGAL MATTERS

MANY schools to-day declare that they have no time to teach matters relating to civic and national life. Whatever is learnt of these matters at school is picked up incidentally in history lessons, when all too often the subject dealt with seems far detached from life as the schoolboy knows it.

The Committee of the Literary and Debating Society itself offers an introduction to the working of committees and to their uses. This may seem a very minor matter. It is—to the blasé schoolmaster or to the boy whose father or mother occupies a prominent civic or national position. But what about the boys who do not possess that home background?

The present writer knew nothing whatever of the working of a police court until he helped his Debating Society to organize a mock Petty Sessional Court. This does not prove the writer's good citizenship or careful driving of a car! It merely means that his education failed in not giving him the slightest inkling of the working of law and local government. The Debating Society can rectify such ignorance. It is a simple matter

to turn the room in which meetings are held into the semblance of a Petty Sessional Court, or even of an Assize Court.

Following is the procedure for (*a*) a Petty Sessional Court, (*b*) a County Court, (*c*) an Assize Court. The occasional staging of a case in one of these courts will prove a welcome addition to the programme of any Society, while at the same time it provides real education in an interesting guise.

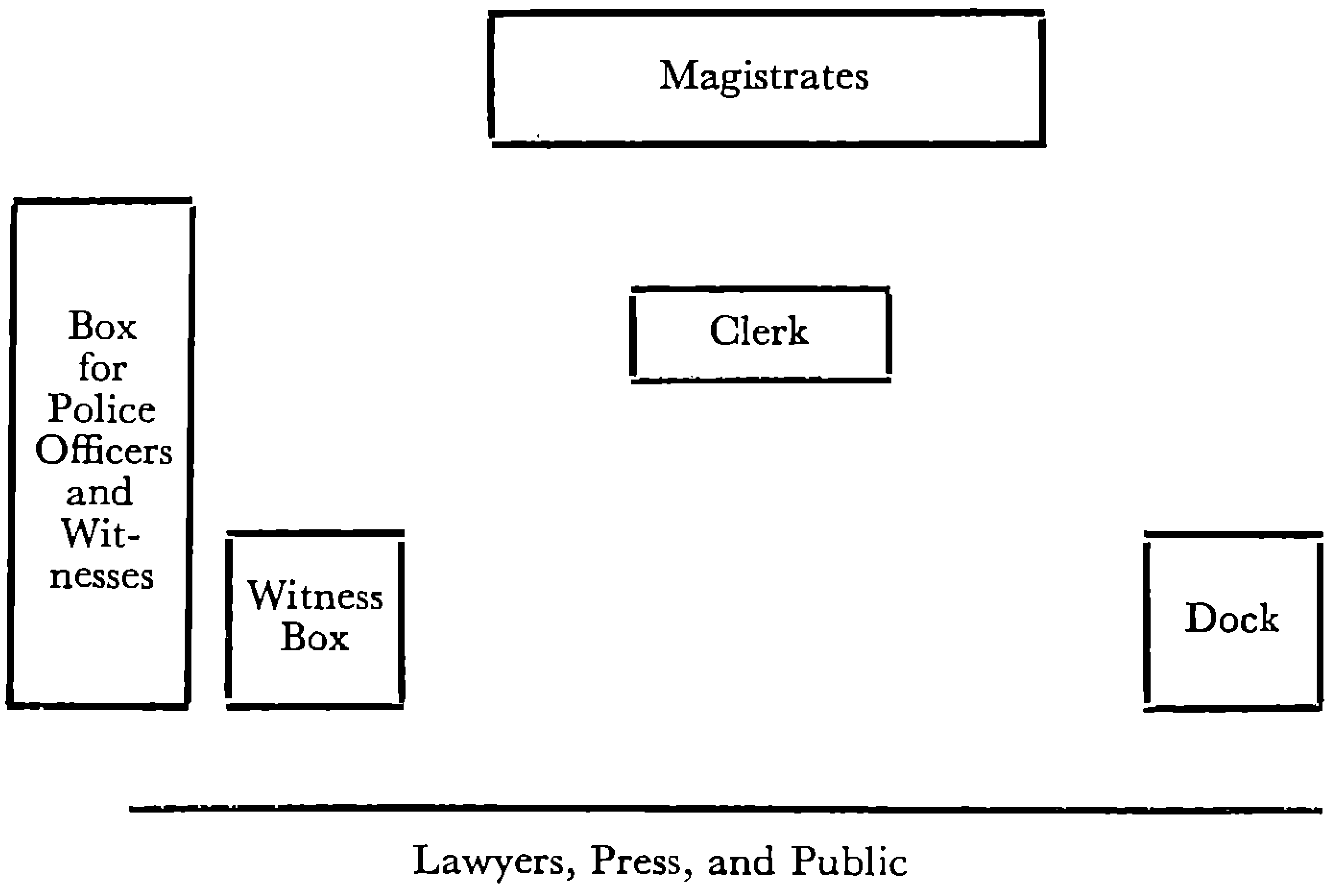
One matter may cause difficulty unless those who are arranging the programme are prepared: that is, insufficient evidence. In my own experience, I have frequently heard the Counsel for the Prosecution allege certain things, but he has omitted to support his statements by the evidence obtained from witnesses! It sounds rather childish. But it is a mistake surprisingly easy to make, unless one is used to legal matters. The Counsel for the Defence, on the other hand, has forgotten to break down some of the allegations of the Prosecution, though, in his final speech for the defence, he makes it clear that no weight is to be attached to the allegations. They have failed to grasp the essentials of cross-examination. This failure arises from two main sources:

(i) Inexperience, which can only be remedied gradually.

(ii) The choice of a too elaborate 'plot.' Boys and girls do not always realize that a simple story can be made as interesting as a very elaborately

worked-out plot. This over-elaboration of plot is especially to be guarded against in a Mock Trial at an Assize Court. After all, in real life a trial may last several days. In a school, the maximum duration for a Mock Trial will be about one hour. It is obvious, therefore, that only essentials can be dealt with. Choose a simple story, then, and impress upon the members playing the various parts in it that it is for them to make the Trial interesting, not by what they say, so much as by how they say it, and by how they throw themselves into the part.

(*a*) Police or Petty Sessional Court



(*All rise as the Magistrates enter the Court.*)

USHER: (*A Policeman*) Silence in court!

CHAIRMAN OF BENCH: First case!

(*Prisoner enters box, a Police Constable standing beside him.*

*The Magistrates' Clerk reads the charge.*)

The Constable responsible for the arrest of the prisoner enters the Witness Box, takes a New Testament in his hand, and says, "I swear (before Almighty God) that the evidence which I shall give before the Court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

The witness then tells the circumstances of the prisoner's arrest, referring when necessary to his notes of the case.

If the offence is indictable, the accused is asked if he elects to be tried by a jury at the next Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace of the County, or whether he is willing to be tried summarily. (If the offence is indictable, the Magistrates can only try the case with the consent of the accused.)

CHAIRMAN: Do you plead 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty' to this charge which has been brought against you?

PRISONER: Guilty/Not Guilty.

CHAIRMAN: Have you anything to say in answer to this charge?

The accused can make a statement if he wishes.

Any necessary witnesses are then called, and these give their evidence after taking the oath. These witnesses can be cross-examined by the accused or by his solicitor.

After the case has been heard, the Magistrates consider their verdict, the Clerk, who is a trained lawyer, giving advice when required.

When the Chairman has announced the verdict of the Bench, he asks the accused if he has anything to say. The Police are also asked if there are any previous convictions against the accused, or if anything is known against him.

Sentence is passed.

Suggested charges for Police Court hearing:

(i) Attempted murder. (Such a case would normally be referred to the Assize Court.)
(ii) Damaging the walls of, say, the Town Hall.
(iii) Cyclists riding more than two abreast.
(iv) Throwing stones at telegraph poles.
(v) Driving a car with an out-of-date licence.
(vi) Riding a bicycle without a light after lighting-up time.
(vii) Using a motor horn after 11 P.M.

### (*b*) County Courts

As has been seen in the foregoing, whereas a Police Court deals with criminal matters, a County Court deals with civil matters. The actual procedure is similar in both cases, but the essential feature of a County Court is simplicity, and much is left to the discretion of the Judge. Normally there is no jury, though one may be called if it is demanded. In this case it will consist of eight persons. In a County Court the person who brings the action is known as the

Plaintiff; the person against whom the action is brought is known as the Defendant. Judges in a County Court are barristers appointed by the Lord Chancellor, and they are paid a fixed salary by the Treasury.

In recent years additional business has been given to the County Court Judges. For example, the duty of assessing compensation for workmen killed or hurt (Workmen's Compensation Acts). Such a case as this might provide an interesting 'plot' for a mock County Court case, but the type of case tried in this Court does not lend itself to the requirements of a Literary and Debating Society as does a Police or Assize Court.

Type of case tried in County Courts:

(*a*) Trespass on private lands.
(*b*) Debt.
(*c*) Breach of Contract.
(*d*) Infringement of the Patents or Copyright Acts.
(*e*) Slander.

N.B.—In a County Court case, when the amount involved exceeds £100, the case is heard at the High Court of Justice in London.

The following paper was written and read by one of the members of a Debating Society before the hearing of a Mock County Court case:

I expect most of the following will be familiar to you. As you have heard, the case which is to be tried

to-day is to be heard in a County Court. The Plaintiff accuses the Defendant of dumping refuse on his property. This does not sound a very serious affair, but it is contrary to the accepted regulations of relations between citizens.

The case is, then, a civil one. The accused has not committed any serious crime, and the Plaintiff is another ordinary citizen. In criminal cases, however, the person who brings the action is always, theoretically, the King, who is represented by an official—a King's Counsel. That is why criminal cases are labelled 'Rex *v.* So-and-so.'

There are, therefore, two types of case: (i) Criminal, *e.g.*, for robbery, murder, etc. (ii) Civil, *e.g.*, breach of contract, or, as in the present case, causing a nuisance to one's neighbours. These cases are tried in different courts according to their nature. The former are first of all tried in the Police Court or Petty Sessions; the latter in the County Court, which is devoted entirely to civil cases.

The Police and County Courts are the first stages in criminal and civil proceedings respectively. They are confined, of course, to relatively small matters. The Police Court or Petty Sessions applies only to small and petty cases, such as riding without a light after lighting-up time, or exceeding the speed limit. More serious offences are referred to the Quarter Sessions (Assize Court). In the same way, major civil cases, involving a sum of more than £100, are tried at the High Court of Justice in London.

When the above paper had been read by a member, a mock County Court case was tried before a pseudo judge. In it one gentleman sued

another for interfering with his property by throwing vegetables into his garden.

### (*c*) An Assize Court

It should be obvious that a Mock Trial in an Assize Court cannot be presented without careful preparation and a certain amount of rehearsal, especially in schools. Failure to realize this has resulted in many 'flops.' Care must be taken to ensure that the Counsel for Prosecution and Defence understand the working of an Assize Court and are quick to seize points raised by witnesses. The latter should provide a certain amount of humour. Each should know just as much of the 'plot' as he or she is supposed to know, and no more. The Jury, with the exception of the Foreman, should be chosen from members of the audience at the start of the Trial. They will then hear the facts of the case for the first time. In other words they will act as a real Jury, unbiassed, and will bring in a verdict in accordance with their own interpretation of the evidence. This provides interest which would be lacking if the Jury were selected beforehand.

There are certain set speeches, *e.g.*, by the Judge's Clerk. These can easily be learnt, though speakers may have reminders of them on the table in front of them. They must not be read. Other speeches—by Counsel or witnesses—should be extempore, though the lines along which they are to proceed will be known in advance.

The 'plot' may prove difficult. Ideally, it will be constructed by one or more members of the Society, but ready-made plots, though still requiring working out and adapting for the purpose of a Mock Trial, will be found in:

*A Century of Detective Stories.* (Hutchinson.)
*Crime and Detection.* Series 1 and 2. World's Classics. (Oxford University Press.)

The 'Court' will be prepared in the room or hall used by the Society.

## Procedure

USHER: Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! All manner of persons having aught to do before his Majesty the King and the Lords Justices of Assize draw near and give their attendance.

(*All rise and stand as the Clerk of Assize, the Counsel for Prosecution and for Defence, and the Judge enter. All sit as Judge sits. The Prisoner enters, guarded by two warders, from the Judge's left.*)

CLERK OF ASSIZE: So-and-so is charged that on the 6th day of March, 1939, at such-and-such a place in the County of —— he did wilfully and with malice aforethought (do so-and-so. Any indictable offence may be tried, *i.e.*, Murder, Manslaughter, Burglary, Arson, Forgery, etc.) against the peace of our Lord the King, his crown and dignity. Prisoner at the Bar, you have heard the Charge. Do you plead Guilty or Not Guilty?

PRISONER: Not Guilty.

CLERK: So-and-so, the names I am about to call are those of the Jury who will try you. If you object

to any of them, you must do so before they are sworn, and your objection will be heard.

At this point, a touch of humour may be added by the Prisoner objecting to one of the proposed Jury on some slight pretext. This is all right where the Mock Trial is intended to be humorous, but it detracts from the dignity of the Court!

(*The Jury rise, and the Clerk of Assize calls over their names, beginning with the Foreman.*)

CLERK: (*When names have been called*) You shall well and truly try the issue joined between our Sovereign Lord the King and the Prisoner at the Bar whom you shall have in charge, and true verdict give according to the evidence (so help you God).

(*As the last words are spoken the Jury raise their right hands and then sit.*)

COUNSEL FOR PROSECUTION: My Lord, members of the Jury.

(*Counsel outlines the crime of which the Prisoner is accused. When he has finished, he calls his first witness,* e.g., *John Smith.*)

JUDGE'S CLERK: John Smith!

(*John Smith rises and enters the Witness Box. The Judge's Clerk gives him a card on which the words of the oath are printed. John Smith then reads the oath.*)

JOHN SMITH: (I swear by Almighty God) that the evidence that I shall give between our Sovereign Lord the King and the Prisoner at the Bar shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (so help me God).

(*Witness is questioned by Counsel for Prosecution, who tries to elicit replies which will show the Prisoner to*

*be guilty. The Judge asks questions about any matter which he does not consider sufficiently clear. When Counsel for Prosecution has finished his cross-examination, he sits down, and the Counsel for Defence rises to cross-examine the same witness, with a view to shaking the evidence, and so helping the Prisoner's cause. When Counsel for Defence has finished, Counsel for Prosecution either asks further questions or gives the witness leave to step down from the box. Actually, witnesses are not allowed in court except when giving evidence, but this rule need not be enforced here.*

(*Counsel for Prosecution continues to call witnesses in this way until the case for the Prosecution is complete.*)

COUNSEL FOR PROSECUTION: That is my case, my lord.

(*He sits, and the Counsel for Defence rises, and proceeds to call his witnesses, beginning with the Prisoner, who need not, but usually does, give evidence. He leaves the Prisoner's box, and walks across to the Witness Box, accompanied by a warder. He and the other witnesses afterwards are sworn in as in the case of the witnesses for the Prosecution. When all the witnesses for the Defence have been cross-examined, Counsel for Defence rises.*)

COUNSEL FOR DEFENCE: My Lord, Gentlemen of the Jury, you have heard. (*He proceeds to sum up all the evidence which supports the Prisoner's case, at the same time trying to discredit, or to gloss over, evidence against it. He will end with an appeal addressed mainly to the Jury's reason and emotions.*

(*When he has finished, he sits, and the Counsel for Prosecution makes a similar speech, trying to show wherein his learned colleague has erred.*)

JUDGE: Gentlemen of the Jury, you have to decide whether the Prisoner, on the 6th day of March, 1939, did

(*The Judge then recounts to the Jury the facts which have been brought out by the evidence, doing so in as impartial a manner as possible. He will also call special attention to any points which he considers important.*)

Can you decide upon your verdict here, or do you wish to retire to consider it?

FOREMAN: (*After consulting rest of Jury*) We wish to retire, my Lord. (*Or otherwise.*)

(*When the Jury have decided on their verdict, they return to their places and the Judge addresses the Foreman.*)

JUDGE: Are you agreed upon your verdict?

FOREMAN: We are, my Lord. (*The verdict must be a unanimous one. If it is not,* i.e., *if no verdict has been reached, the Judge must announce that the case will be tried again at the next Assizes.*)

JUDGE: Do you find the Prisoner Guilty or Not Guilty?

FOREMAN: Not Guilty, my Lord.

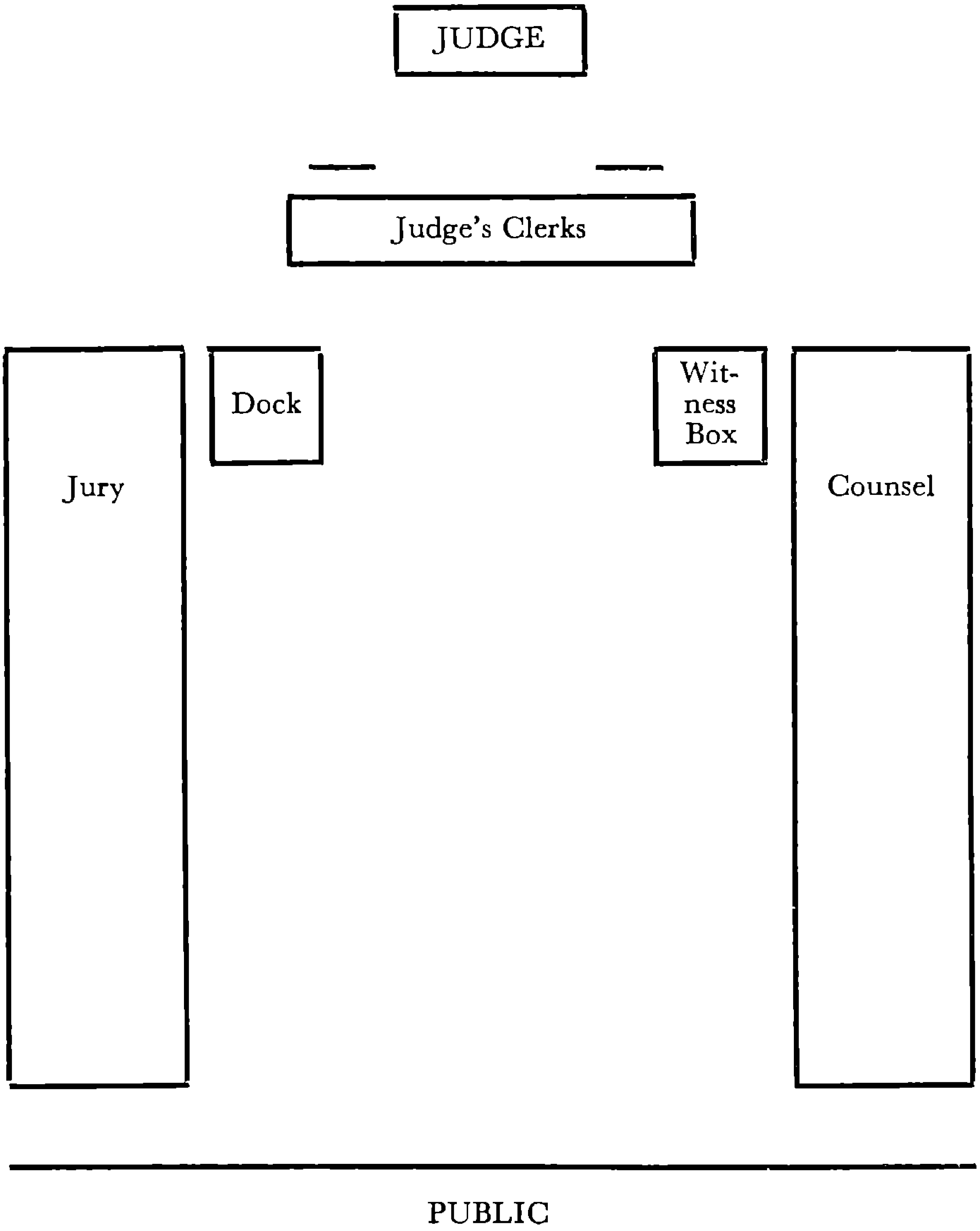
JUDGE: So-and-so, I agree with the verdict. You leave the Court without a stain upon your character.

The Prisoner is then free to leave, the Court disbanding in the order in which it assembled. If the Prisoner is found Guilty, procedure is, of course, a little different.

FOREMAN: Guilty, my Lord.

JUDGE: Prisoner at the Bar, you have been found guilty of a grave offence. (*The Judge then delivers a moral discourse suggested by the crime in question.*) I sentence you

## ARRANGEMENT OF ROOM FOR A MOCK TRIAL



## Announcement for the School Notice Board, announcing a Mock Trial

A MOCK TRIAL

will be conducted at 4.30 P.M. on ——— when John Brock will be tried for the murder of Thomas Slack.

The Judge:
Counsel for the Prosecution:
Counsel for the Defence:
Clerk of Assize:
Judge's Clerk:
Usher:
Prisoner (John Brock):
Warders:

Witnesses for the Prosecution:
- Inspector Gorringe:
- Dr James Duthey:
- Police Constable Timothy Boot:
- Mrs Agatha Spoon (A Charlady):
- Mr Frank Edgar (A friend of the dead man):

Witnesses for the Defence:
- Mr Samuel Beige (An Inn-keeper):
- Mr Watson-Holmes (A friend of the accused):
- Miss Amelia Corring (Landlady of the House in which the prisoner lodged):

### Notes

(i) Every man is innocent until he is proved guilty.

(ii) No arrested person is forced to give evidence against himself, and an arrested person must be warned to this effect,

(iii) If the Jury disagree about their verdict, the Foreman informs the Judge, who directs that the case be re-tried with a new Jury.

(iv) A criminal Assize Court case is called "Rex *versus* So-and-so."

(v) Judges go 'on circuit' in pairs to the chief towns where Assizes are held. One sits in the Civil Court to try cases between man and man which are too serious to be settled in the County Court, but not serious enough for them to be taken to the High Court in London. The other Judge tries important criminal cases in the Crown Court, *e.g.*, cases of burglary, forgery, murder.

The following books deal with the matter of English justice in a concise manner:

C. S. S. HIGHAM: *The Good Citizen.* Chapter IX. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

K. GIBBERD: *The People's Government.* Chapter XI. (Dent.)

EDWARD JENKS: *The Government of the British Empire.* Chapter XI. (Murray.)

E. J. S. LAY: *Citizenship.* (Macmillan.)

J. R. PEDDIE: *The British Citizen.* Chapter VIII. (Blackie.)

## CHAPTER VIII

# PLAY-READINGS

LARGE schools will, no doubt, have a Dramatic Society or a Play-reading Circle in addition to a Literary and Debating Society. This is all to the good, but their existence is no reason for neglecting drama entirely in the latter. A Literary and Debating Society aims at developing personality. An intelligent interest in, and experience of, acting is surely one means of achieving this. Pupils who have been too shy to make speeches, suddenly show themselves in a new light when they throw themselves into a part in a play. No longer are reserved people afraid of making fools of themselves. They are drawn to act in a certain manner, and act they do. If one can be surprised, as one frequently is, by the sudden revelation of acting-ability in school, when a Shakespearean play is being acted in a form-room, how much greater will be the scope for self-expression when a modern play is read and acted in out-of-school hours? Why should not the Literary and Debating Society utilize such interest in an attempt to make others interested, either by asking the School Dramatic Society to give a play-reading or by arranging one themselves?

A Literary and Debating Society hopes, too,

to instil a greater interest in literature into each of its members. Drama is a most important section of literature.

Still more important are play-readings given by Literary and Debating Societies in schools which do not possess their own separate Dramatic Societies or Play-reading Circles. Most secondary schools to-day produce an annual play, but many of them possess no Dramatic Society wherein would-be actors can obtain their training. It may be that some actors are born, but the great majority of those who take part in school plays certainly need making! How often do we see boys and girls playing the parts in some school play, who have not the remotest idea of how to act? They speak their lines woodenly; they move only when they have to. This is not entirely the producer's fault. It is due to sheer inexperience, not only of acting but of the various forms of drama which exist. A School Literary and Debating Society can do much to put right such a state of affairs. Speaking can be improved out of all recognition by instilling into members some of the essentials of acting—poise, methods of speech and dialect, use of gesticulation, positioning, voice-inflexion, and, most of all, the necessity of living a part. The school producer will no longer need to try endless experiments before he gets his casting as perfect as possible. He can watch pupils acting and speaking in the Literary and Debating Society throughout the year. He

will know what each can do, because he will have watched them learning how to speak and act.

Drama is rapidly becoming a recognized teaching-method. One has only to glance at educational publishers' lists to appreciate this. But there are still schools to-day in which little is known of drama, of its history, and of what it really is. In such schools the Literary and Debating Society may well present a play occasionally for its own sake, just as members present lectures or papers. But a word of warning is necessary: Whenever and wherever a play is read, it is always wise—in fact, necessary—to hold a preliminary reading. Experienced drama readers can give a good reading at first sight—sometimes; inexperienced readers—never.

When a play-reading appears on the programme of a Literary and Debating Society a member of the Committee, or even an ordinary member of the Society—especially if he or she happens to have a special interest in drama—should be appointed to produce the play. He will decide who shall play the parts, and he will be responsible for the staging. It is not necessary or even desirable to have a member of the staff doing this. It is often a pleasant surprise to a schoolmaster to see how admirably a boy will accommodate the restrictions of a schoolroom to the requirements of a selected play.

When some experience has been gained in this sort of thing it is useful sometimes to organize a

competition. A very short sketch or an incident complete in itself can be selected. This will be produced by, say, three different people, each choosing their own casts. The audience, while watching the three versions of the one incident, will make mental or written notes. At the close, criticism and appreciation is offered, the producer and actors explaining why they did, or did not, do certain things.

Other suggestions for programmes to be arranged at Literary and Debating Societies are as follows:

(i) EARLY ENGLISH DRAMA.—Extracts will be read and acted from such plays as *Noah's Flood*, or *The Sacrifice of Isaac*. (Both from the *Chester Plays*.) These early miracle plays might be shown developing from the bare biblical story, with the addition of humorous characters, *e.g.*, Noah's wife, into the Elizabethan drama. Or again, the introduction of personified good and bad qualities, which led to the popular morality plays, of which *Everyman* is the finest example, can be shown. Extracts from the plays themselves will be interpolated by the remarks of a commentator, who shows why the early plays were known as 'Cycle' plays, or how it was that drama originated in the Church and how it was eventually divorced from the Church.

## Useful Books

A. W. POLLARD: *English Miracle Plays*. (Oxford University Press.)

J. Q. ADAMS: *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas.* (Harrap.)

ERNEST RHYS (Editor): *Everyman.* (Dent's "Everyman" Library.)

(ii) PLAYS DEALING WITH FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES—war and peace, citizenship, social problems. Such plays may be said to be the modern equivalents of the older morality play, and parallels may be drawn between them. Modern plays of this sort are:

CLIFFORD BAX: *The Cloak.*
JOHN DRINKWATER: *X=O.*
MORRIS: *Lion of Sparta.*
EDWARD PERCY: *Women at War.*
MONA SWANN: *Saul and David.*

Practically any play by John Galsworthy or G. B. Shaw.

(ii) PLAYS CENTRING ROUND CHARACTER.—An interesting discussion may follow the presentation of such a play as to whether the play really does develop from character, or whether the character follows the plot. How did the author's mind work? Did he mean to draw one character by showing how that character reacted to certain circumstances, or did he mean to show how one particular character affects others? It has been said that a one-act play has not sufficient duration to build up a really living character. Is this true? On such lines one may develop numerous lines of thought. Plays suitable for consideration in this connexion are:

John Galsworthy: *The Little Man.*
Bernard Gilbert: *The Old Bull.*
Stanley Houghton: *The Dear Departed.*
Herman Ould: *Joan the Maid.*

The following full-length plays are also valuable in any study of character in drama:

J. M. Barrie: *The Admirable Crichton.*
R. C. Sherriff: *Journey's End.* / *Badger's Green.*

(iv) THE ONE-ACT PLAY *Shivering Shocks*, by Clemence Dane, is an interesting play to study, since it was written to conform to ingredients in the way of character, properties, and situations suggested by schoolboys.

(v) THE MELODRAMATIC PLAY.—An interesting consideration here is how the author obtains his thrills. Does he do it—

(*a*) by a sudden twist, forming a climax to a mystery?

J. J. Bell: *Thread o' Scarlet.*

(*b*) by the macabre quality of the whole story?

W. W. Jacobs and Louis N. Parker: *The Monkey's Paw.*

(*c*) by working up to a strong climax?

Walter Hudd: *Lights Out.*
Padraic Colum: *The Betrayal.*

(vi) THE WHIMSICAL PLAY.

A. A. MILNE: *The Romantic Age* } Three-act
J. M. BARRIE: *Mary Rose* } Plays.
J. M. SYNGE: *Riders to the Sea.*
W. B. YEATS: *The Hour Glass.*

As will have been seen, most of the plays suggested above are one-act plays. A play complete in itself is always more satisfying than an extract or an act taken from a longer play. The time at the disposal of a School Literary and Debating Society will be, at most probably, one hour. Time must be allowed for the reading of minutes, and routine business that may require attention, and for explanation and discussion concerning the play to be presented. It will be seen therefore that a one-act play admirably fits in with the time limits.

There are many collections of one-act plays published to-day, but the following may prove especially useful to a Literary and Debating Society.

*Scenes from Great Plays.* (Collins' Laurel and Gold Series.)
*Twenty One-Act Plays.* (Dent's Everyman Library.)
*Plays before Shakespeare.* (Dent's King's Treasuries of Literature.)
*Modern Plays*, Series 1 and 2. (Dent's King's Treasuries of Literature.)
*Drama Old and New.* (Dent's King's Treasuries of Literature.)
*One-Act Plays of To-day*, Series 1-6. (Harrap.)

*Junior One-Act Plays of To-day*, Series 1-3. (Harrap.)
*Modern One-Act Plays.* (Longmans, Green and Co.)
*An Anthology of Modern Drama.* (Nelson.)
*Seven Modern Plays.* (Nelson.)
*Eight Modern Plays.* (Nelson.)
*Nine Modern Plays.* (Nelson.)
*Ten Modern Plays.* (Nelson.)
*Fifteen Modern Plays.* (Nelson.)

If any further evidence for the place of drama in the work of a Literary and Debating Society is needed, it is supplied in the following extract from the Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education (1938):

> It is worth adding a note on the value of dramatic performances as an aid to appreciation. The drama has now a sure footing in all schools, and its usefulness in cultivating self-confidence and good speech and developing initiative need not be stressed here. But it also has its place as one of the best means of revealing the strength and beauty of great literature. This is, of course, primarily true of the actual performers; it must be difficult to play a part in one of the great plays of Shakespeare without abiding profit. But it is also, for the school audience, one of the surest ways of communicating the secret of great literature.

CHAPTER IX

# LITERARY EVENINGS WITH A COMPÈRE

A school Society can easily become insipid, especially in boarding-schools. Traditions and curious conventions take naturally to the atmosphere of great boarding-schools. One cannot but admire them, but all too often they seem to breathe the atmosphere of the cloisters. There is nothing progressive about them. Why should not these traditions be given a shock occasionally? Why not hang a few paper chains on the old oak? After a term of debates, lectures, and papers, a School Literary and Debating Society recently invited the whole school to what was entitled in the programme "A Christmas Anthology." A title coined by a keen Committee soon proved to have more in it than had at first met the eye. Books were searched and much was discovered about English literature in so far as it dealt with Christmas.

There was to be a Compère who should weave together the various threads of literature represented by poems and prose extracts. The word 'Compère' needs some explanation. It is a term usually associated to-day with a broadcast variety programme, in which the Compère is one who

links together the individual units or acts which form the programme. A Compère in a Literary and Debating Society programme has a similar task, and it is for that reason that the term is used. Another attribute of a Compère is the humorous character of the speeches which he makes. He links together the different sections of a programme to make a unified whole, and he does this in as interesting and entertaining a manner as possible.

In preparing the "Christmas Anthology" difficulties arose. There would have to be nothing boring, especially if the meeting was to be open to the whole school, and it was realized that small boys at any rate would not take kindly to the mere reading of a selection of extracts from literature. The Compère could be relied upon to make things as interesting as possible, but that alone would not suffice. And then came the original suggestions: A ghost story to be told by four members, each concocting a section of the story and narrating it for two minutes, and none of them knowing what form the others' stories would take; a humorous five-minute debate between two members upon some facetious motion; papers by members on some aspect of Christmas. And why should not the School Musical Society be invited to add one or two items to the programme? To wake up those members of the audience who might grow drowsy there were brief intervals for community singing of Christmas

carols. Two weeks previously the school had presented one of Shakespeare's plays. Three of the members of the Society had written a short parody of certain incidents in that play, and that parody too found a place in the programme.

And the result? It was a wet, stormy night; the school was situated in a small country market-town, and was a day-school; fifty per cent. of the pupils had to come in from the country by cycle, bus, or train. Yet eighty or ninety pupils (boys and girls, for it was a co-educational school) turned up. The show—for one must admit that the show element predominated over the purely literary element—created a new interest in the Society, while the members themselves who were responsible for the arrangements had gained a new insight into a certain aspect of English literature.

That particular meeting was held, of course, at Christmas-time, but similar 'Anthology' evenings might well be arranged for any time of the year. In fact, that same school shortly afterwards arranged a "Spring Anthology," the girls this time taking most of the arrangements upon themselves.

The following outline will give some idea of the programme of such a meeting, and of the Compère's duties. The outline of the type of remarks which a Compère might make is printed in brackets. It must be remembered that the task of the Compère is all-important. He it is who

must weave together the individual items, and according to his personality, so the programme may need to be revised.

## A Christmas Anthology

*Christmas Selection by the Musical Society (Orchestra) without previous announcement.*

[As Compère I am supposed to do something. What I am going to do is to ask So-and-so to sing "Good King Wenceslas" and all of you to join in the chorus. You all know it. If I see anyone not joining in, there will be trouble. Sing!]

*Solo and chorus: "Good King Wenceslas."*

[Yes, that wasn't so bad. I thought the back section of the room were not putting as much life into it as they might have done, though.

In thinking of Christmas, one's thoughts are bound to turn at some time to the scene at Bethlehem two thousand years ago. Let us hear the account of the birth of Christ as it is described by Doctor Luke. The version is the Authorized one of 1611, compiled when Shakespeare was living.]

*Authorized Version of the Bible. Luke ii,* 1–19.

[Christmas is essentially a festival of childhood and childlike jollity—a time when we see fathers playing trains and grandfathers lingering beneath the mistletoe. John Milton was one of the last persons whom we should associate with Christmas. Somehow we can never imagine Milton as a child—never as anything but a rather stern poet who wrote *Paradise Lost* —yet Milton when he was still an undergraduate at

Cambridge wrote "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," in which he gives his contribution to the literature of Christmas.]

*John Milton: "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." Selection.*

[How often do we hear the phrase "the good old days"? We even see it on examination papers! Now here is Charles Dickens' account of the old-fashioned Christmas festivities at Dingley Dell. Does anyone know where the account occurs? Yes, of course—*Pickwick Papers.*]

*Charles Dickens: Extract from the Dingley Dell chapters of "Pickwick Papers."*

[And now, with such a picture before us, let us hear what a modern writer has to say about it.]

*Paper written and read by a member: "Christmas as I want it."*

[Now, some of us when we were younger—and perhaps we still do—used to dream of what Christmas would be like. Charles Kingsley has expressed some of his wonderings about Christmas in a poem. Listen.]

*Charles Kingsley: "Christmas Day." Selection.*

[He wonders what it will be like for sailors—'How will it dawn, the coming Christmas Day?' John Masefield spent many years of his life as a sailor. Though he was born inland at Ledbury in Herefordshire, he has the sea in his veins, and here he describes Christmas Eve at Sea.]

*John Masefield: "Christmas Eve at Sea."*

[All asleep? It's time you woke up, for I want

you all to sing "The First Nowell." And don't forget to sing!]

*Community Singing:* "*The First Nowell.*"

[As we grow older, Christmas loses some of its excitement. We long to feel again the thrill we felt when we were younger, but some of us seem to miss it. And some of us grow cynical about it. We become aged and crabbed long before our faces wrinkle. J. B. Priestley has described a young lady's feelings at Christmas. The young lady lives in a women's hostel and works in a City office in London.]

*J. B. Priestley:* "*Angel Pavement.*" *Extract from the beginning of Chapter VIII.*

[She seems to be getting a bit cynical. But it was Thomas Hardy who expressed the worst cynicism about Christmas and all it means. A poem of four lines, yet what a lot of nastiness can be contained in four lines!]

*Thomas Hardy:* "*Christmas*, 1924."

[Let us leave our cynics. Mr So-and-so (a member) has been arguing with Mr Thingummijig (another member). Why, we know not. We are still more befogged when we learn the subject of their argument. However, I have persuaded both of them to debate the matter here, taking not more than five minutes over it. I will therefore call upon Mr So-and-so, who will state that .]

*Five-minute farcical debate:* "*That Father Christmas* does *come down the chimney!*"

[And now, of course, we know all about it! But whether Father Christmas does, or does not, come

down the chimney, we do expect presents at Christmas-time. Master Hoodoo McFiggins was an American boy who also expected presents. Stephen Leacock, who follows in the steps of Mark Twain as a great American humorist, tells the story of Hoodoo.]

*Stephen Leacock: "Hoodoo McFiggins' Christmas," from the book* "Literary Lapses."

[Possibly some of you have had similar experiences? You have my sympathy. Now the Musical Society are going to give us a carol. If they pass a hat round afterwards, you know what to do!]

*Trio by the Musical Society: "A Coventry Carol."*

[And here is another carol—a modern one. This carol, though, is not going to be sung. Mr So-and-so (one of the readers of the following) is not sure whether his voice will stand it—or whether you will stand his voice.]

*Alfred Noyes: "A Devonshire Christmas."*
*(Solo reading of verses; whispered chorus of refrain.)*

[No Christmas is complete without a ghost story. In preparing this programme we realized that, but we were not sure how we could manage to give a good ghost story in the few moments at our disposal. Still, we have done our best. Mr A (a member) will start telling us a ghost story. He will be allowed two minutes. When those two minutes are up I shall say "Stop!" and Mr B will continue the story from where he left off. After two minutes Mr C will carry on, and Mr D will finish it off. Before we put out the lights—darkness, of course, being essential to a good ghost story—I want to remind you that these

four people will be making up the story as they go along. There has been no collaboration between them.]

*Ghost story by four members.*

[And now, having put on the lights, we will soothe our jaded nerves with another carol.]

*Community singing: "Hark! the herald angels sing."*

[And so we complete our circle of a literary Christmas, and once more our thoughts turn back over two thousand years to the stable at Bethlehem and we see Joseph and Mary going from house to house to find a lodging.]

*G. K. Chesterton: "The House of Christmas."*

## Bibliography

*Prose*

DICKENS: *Christmas Carol; Pickwick Papers.*
HARDY: *Under the Greenwood Tree.*
ELIOT: *Silas Marner.*
LEACOCK: *Literary Lapses.*
PRIESTLEY: *Angel Pavement.*

*Poetry*

Selection in *A Christmas Anthology.* (Benn.)
ANONYMOUS: "Schoolboy's Song at Christmas." (*An Anthology of School.* Ed. C. S. Holder.)
CHESTERTON: "A Christmas Carol." (There are two of these.)
"Christmas Song."
"The Nativity."
"A Child of the Snows."

"The House of Christmas."
"The Wise Men."
"The Donkey."
HARDY: "Christmastide."
"Christmas, 1924."
KINGSLEY: "A Christmas Carol."
"Christmas Day."
MASEFIELD: "Christmas Eve at Sea."
"Christmas, 1903."
NOYES: "A Devonshire Christmas."
"The Carol of the Fir Tree."

The above are suggestions. Quite obviously, the list is incomplete. But any Society which attempts an 'Anthology' should make sure that the members themselves look up their own references. If this is not done, much of the value of such an evening is lost.

CHAPTER X

# AFTER-DINNER SPEECHES

RATHER a startling heading for a section of the possible activities of a School Literary and Debating Society! But in suggesting such speeches I am thinking especially of small country day-schools, where programmes must be genuinely interesting and attractive if they are to be attended by boys and girls who have to come in from the country.

When a meeting of the type I have in mind is planned, it is advisable to have a commentator, who will act as Chairman of the whole meeting, and will explain any necessary matters, just as a B.B.C. announcer would do if after-dinner speeches were being broadcast.

A possible programme would be arranged as follows:

(i) A dinner of, say, the Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers. The commentator would explain what the Society is, and what it stands for. The dinner is over—that is to say, the eating part of it! Speeches are then delivered by two or three authors or dramatists, dealing with literary problems of the day.

(ii) The commentator then introduces the meeting to a banquet of, say, the Guild of Village

Blacksmiths, at which its President, Sir Gilbert Smythe-Smithy, is to speak. The latter proceeds to do so.

(iii) The commentator takes the meeting to a dinner given to welcome home a famous Arctic explorer. After some personage has spoken a few introductory remarks about the achievements of the explorer, and proposed his health, the explorer's reply is heard.

When such a programme as this is arranged, the speakers must understand that they will not be allowed to read their speeches. Brief notes only will be permitted. Those arranging the programme should see that there is as much variety as possible in the type of speeches.

CHAPTER XI

# LITERARY TEST MATCHES

A LITERARY Test Match offers relaxation from the weightier business of a Debating Society, and though it may appear to some to be too much of a mere amusement, yet it has the virtue of being a possible incentive to a greater knowledge of literature. Where there is an Old Pupils' Association, it forms a useful link between past and present, the School challenging the Association.

The following procedure and suggestions for questions deal with a Literary Test Match, but a historical, geographical, or intelligence test match can be organized on similar lines.

The following officials are required:

(i) One or more Umpires.
(ii) Two Scorers.
(iii) Two Bowlers.

The above are additional to the members of teams, each of which is composed of eleven players. The two teams sit one on each side of the room.

## PROCEDURE

(i) The Captains toss for innings.
(ii) If the Captain who wins the toss elects to

go in first, the Bowler attached to the opposing side rises and proceeds to 'bowl' his questions, beginning with the Captain.

(iii) When he has reached the end of the team, the other Bowler rises and 'bowls' his questions.

(iv) At the end of each 'innings,' the scores can be announced by the Scorers.

(v) Any number of innings can be played, but with eleven in a team, five or six innings will probably suffice.

(vi) The Umpires, of course, settle any dispute, and their decision over any answer is final.

## Scoring

A correct answer to any question scores three points. If a player is unable to answer or answers incorrectly, the question passes to the next player. If the answer is given correctly by him, two points are awarded. If not, the question passes to the third player, who, if a correct answer is given, is awarded one point. After the third player has been questioned the question is dead. When a question is dead the next is given to the player who should have come next, *i.e.*, if player No. 3 misses, and player No. 4 answers correctly two points are awarded and the question is dead. The next question is then 'bowled' at No. 4, and if he answers correctly three points are awarded.

## EXAMPLES OF THE TYPE OF QUESTIONS SUITABLE FOR LITERARY TEST MATCHES

1. *Drama.* Who wrote the following?

(*a*) "The Spanish Tragedy"
(*b*) "The Jew of Malta"
(*c*) "Ralph Roister Doister"
(*d*) "Every Man in his Humour"
(*e*) "The Duchess of Malfi"
(*f*) "Edward the Second"
(*g*) "The Knight of the Burning Pestle"
(*h*) "Coriolanus"
(*i*) "All for Love"
(*j*) "The Beggar's Opera"
(*k*) "The Good-natured Man"
(*l*) "She Stoops to Conquer"
(*m*) "The Rivals"
(*n*) "Prometheus Unbound"
(*o*) "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon"
(*p*) "The Importance of being Earnest"
(*q*) "Trelawney of the Wells"
(*r*) "The Devil's Disciple"
(*s*) "The Admirable Crichton"
(*t*) "The Gods of the Mountain"
(*u*) "Riders to the Sea"
(*v*) "The Silver Box"
(*w*) "Journey's End"
(*x*) "Richard of Bordeaux"

2. *The Novel.* Who wrote the following?

(*a*) "Robinson Crusoe"
(*b*) "Rasselas"
(*c*) "Joseph Andrews"
(*d*) "The Vicar of Wakefield"
(*e*) "The Mill on the Floss"
(*f*) "Henry Esmond"
(*g*) "Jane Eyre"
(*h*) "The Mystery of Edwin Drood"
(*i*) "Ivanhoe"
(*j*) "Westward Ho!"
(*k*) "A Tale of Two Cities"
(*l*) "Tess of the d'Urbervilles"
(*m*) "The Forsyte Saga"
(*n*) "The Good Companions"

3. *Writers.* What are the real names of the following?

(*a*) George Eliot
(*b*) A.A.
(*c*) Ian Hay
(*d*) Sapper
(*e*) Evoe
(*f*) G.K.C.
(*g*) Taffrail
(*h*) Bartimeus
(*i*) Dornford Yates
(*j*) George Birmingham

4. *Characters.* In what books or plays do the following characters appear?

(*a*) Parson Adams (*b*) The Red Queen (*c*) Dr Watson
(*d*) Mr Micawber (*e*) Mrs Malaprop (*f*) Alan Breck
(*g*) John Silver (*h*) Jess Oakroyd (*i*) Sam Weller
(*j*) Sidney Carton (*k*) John Ridd (*l*) Pooh-Bah
(*m*) Javert (*n*) Ulysses (*o*) Man Friday

5. *Writers.* Who created the following characters?

(*a*) Sherlock Holmes (*b*) Jeeves (*c*) Lord Peter Wimsey
(*d*) Dr Thorndyke (*e*) Hercule Poirot (*f*) Inspector French
(*g*) Winnie the Pooh (*h*) Bull-dog Drummond

6. *Poetry.* Who wrote the following poems?

(*a*) The Aeneid (*b*) The Romaunt of the Rose
(*c*) Hudibras (*d*) Lycidas
(*e*) The Rape of the Lock (*f*) The Fairy Queen
(*g*) The Seasons (*h*) The Task
(*i*) The Prelude (*j*) The Idylls of the King
(*k*) Marmion (*l*) The Old Vicarage, Grantchester
(*m*) Dauber (*n*) Sohrab and Rustum

7. *Literary Chronology.* In what century did each of the following live?

(*a*) Chaucer (*b*) Philip Sidney (*c*) Milton
(*d*) John Dryden (*e*) Oliver Goldsmith (*f*) Samuel Johnson
(*g*) William Cowper (*h*) Charles Kingsley (*i*) Matthew Arnold

8. *Shakespeare.* In what plays do the following characters appear?

(*a*) Ophelia (*b*) Quince (*c*) Berowne
(*d*) Imogen (*e*) Polonius (*f*) Malvolio
(*g*) Portia (*h*) Cordelia (*i*) Miranda
(*j*) Caliban (*k*) Desdemona (*l*) Brutus
(*m*) Puck (*n*) Ariel (*o*) Benedick
(*p*) Jaques (*q*) Sir Toby Belch (*r*) Nerissa

9. *Word-derivation.* From what language do the following words come?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (*a*) chutney | (*b*) tea | (*c*) beef |
| (*d*) piano | (*e*) caravan | (*f*) amphibian |
| (*g*) skipper | (*h*) kimono | (*i*) tobacco |

10. *Word-pronunciation.* How are the following pronounced?

(These words must, of course, be spelt out by the bowler.)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (*a*) Cholmondeley | (*b*) Beauchamp | (*c*) Derby |
| (*d*) Leveson | (*e*) St John | (*f*) Wemyss |

11. *Grammar.*

(*a*) Use the word 'city' as (i) a noun, (ii) an adjective.
(*b*) Use the word 'down' as (i) an adverb, (ii) a preposition.
(*c*) Use the word 'who' as (i) a relative pronoun, (ii) an interrogative pronoun.
(*d*) Use the clause 'when he came' as (i) a noun clause, (ii) an adverbial clause.

The above questions are merely suggestions, showing the type of question which might be asked in a Literary Test Match. They may deal entirely with literature, as such; they may include questions on grammar, language, figures of speech, and so on. There are, however, two other possible tests which might be mentioned:

(i) A selected member from each team may be asked to speak for two or three minutes on a chosen subject. Both speakers must, of course, speak on the same subject, which necessitates the withdrawal of one from the room while the other is speaking.

(ii) A selected member of each team is asked

to give (orally) a list of words having a certain selected final or initial letter. This has to be done in a given time, and again, of course, the test must be similar for both sides, which necessitates the withdrawal of the one not speaking.

The scoring in the above type of tests is at the discretion of the judges. In sections 1–11, the scoring will be in accordance with that given above; in the last two suggestions, up to ten points might be the maximum obtainable for the extempore speeches, and one point for every three words in the last test.

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SUGGESTED FOR A LITERARY TEST MATCH

1. *Drama*

(*a*) Thomas Kyd
(*b*) Christopher Marlowe
(*c*) Nicholas Udall
(*d*) Ben Jonson
(*e*) John Webster
(*f*) Christopher Marlowe
(*g*) Beaumont and Fletcher
(*h*) Shakespeare
(*i*) John Dryden
(*j*) John Gay
(*k*) and (*l*) Oliver Goldsmith
(*m*) R. B. Sheridan
(*n*) Percy Bysshe Shelley
(*o*) Robert Browning
(*p*) Oscar Wilde
(*q*) A. W. Pinero
(*r*) G. B. Shaw
(*s*) J. M. Barrie
(*t*) Lord Dunsany
(*u*) J. M. Synge
(*v*) John Galsworthy
(*w*) R. C. Sherriff
(*x*) Gordon Daviot

2. *The Novel*

(*a*) Daniel Defoe
(*b*) Samuel Johnson
(*c*) Henry Fielding
(*d*) Oliver Goldsmith
(*e*) George Eliot
(*f*) W. M. Thackeray
(*g*) Charlotte Brontë
(*h*) Charles Dickens
(*i*) Walter Scott
(*j*) Charles Kingsley
(*k*) Charles Dickens
(*l*) Thomas Hardy
(*m*) John Galsworthy
(*n*) J. B. Priestley

3. *Writers*

(*a*) Mary Ann Evans
(*b*) Anthony Armstrong
(*c*) Maj.-Gen. John Hay Beith
(*d*) Lieut.-Colonel H. C. McNeile
(*e*) E. V. Knox
(*f*) G. K. Chesterton
(*g*) Captain Henry Taprell Dorling, R.N.
(*h*) Paymaster-Commander Lewis Ricci, R.N.
(*i*) Captain C. W. Mercer
(*j*) Canon J. O. Hannay

4. *Characters*

(*a*) "The Adventures of Joseph Andrews"
(*b*) "Alice through the Looking-glass"
(*c*) Any 'Sherlock Holmes' book
(*d*) "David Copperfield"
(*e*) "The Rivals"
(*f*) "Kidnapped" and "Catriona"
(*g*) "Treasure Island"
(*h*) "The Good Companions"
(*i*) "Pickwick Papers"
(*j*) "A Tale of Two Cities"
(*k*) "Lorna Doone"
(*l*) "The Mikado"
(*m*) "Les Misérables"
(*n*) "The Odyssey"
(*o*) "Robinson Crusoe"

5. *Writers.*

(*a*) Arthur Conan Doyle
(*b*) P. G. Wodehouse
(*c*) Dorothy Sayers
(*d*) R. Austin Freeman
(*e*) Agatha Christie
(*f*) Freeman Wills Croft
(*g*) A. A. Milne
(*h*) Sapper

6. *Poetry*

(*a*) Virgil
(*b*) Chaucer
(*c*) Samuel Butler
(*d*) Milton
(*e*) Pope
(*f*) Spenser
(*g*) James Thomson
(*h*) William Cowper
(*i*) Wordsworth
(*j*) Tennyson
(*k*) Walter Scott
(*l*) Rupert Brooke
(*m*) John Masefield
(*n*) Matthew Arnold

7. *Literary Chronology*

(*a*) 14th
(*b*) 16th
(*c*) 17th
(*d*) 18th
(*e*) 18th
(*f*) 18th
(*g*) 18th
(*h*) 19th
(*i*) 19th

8. *Shakespeare*

(*a*) Hamlet (*b*) A Midsummer Night's Dream
(*c*) Love's Labour's Lost (*d*) Cymbeline
(*e*) Hamlet (*f*) Twelfth Night
(*g*) The Merchant of Venice [1] (*h*) King Lear
(*i*) The Tempest (*j*) The Tempest
(*k*) Othello (*l*) Julius Caesar
(*m*) A Midsummer Night's Dream (*n*) The Tempest
(*o*) Much Ado about Nothing (*p*) As You Like It
(*q*) Twelfth Night (*r*) The Merchant of Venice

9. *Word-derivation*

(*a*) Hindustani (*b*) Chinese (*c*) Old French
(*d*) Italian (*e*) Persian (*f*) Greek
(*g*) Dutch (*h*) Japanese (*i*) Spanish

10. *Word-pronunciation*

(*a*) Chumley (*b*) Beecham (*c*) Darby
(*d*) Looson (*e*) Sinjun (*f*) Weems

[1] Brutus's wife in "Julius Caesar" is also called Portia

CHAPTER XII

# SPELLING-BEES

LITERARY and Debating Societies sometimes include such amusements in their programmes. But they *are* amusements, and one is doubtful whether they justify inclusion in the list of a Society's activities during a term in which only about twelve meetings can be held. On the other hand, as in the case of Literary Test Matches, a Spelling-bee forms a useful link between past and present pupils of a school. Such a meeting, however, would normally be additional to the ordinary meetings of the Literary and Debating Society.

The B.B.C. have done much to popularize Spelling-bees. It may be helpful, however, if the following rules are given.

## OFFICIALS

A Chairman, who gives the words to be spelt to each team member, and, if necessary, their definitions.

Two Scorers, one for each team.

Two persons who 'gong' mistakes. Some amusement can be introduced by the type of gongs used. For example, tin bowls and baths,

or tin trays, make useful variations to real gongs. Each team will have a differently sounding gong.

The two teams each consist usually of seven members, though this number may be varied. These teams will sit facing each other on the left and right of the Chairman. Each team will have a Captain.

PROCEDURE

(i) The Captains toss for innings, the winner choosing whether he or his opponent shall spell first.

(ii) The Chairman pronounces a word which the Captain of one side will spell.

(iii) To show that the speller has finished, the word will be pronounced by the speller. For example:

CHAIRMAN: "Will you spell 'Idiosyncrasy'?"
SPELLER: "'I-D-I-O-S-Y-N-C-R-A-S-Y.' Idiosyncrasy."

(iv) If the word is correctly spelt, the Chairman asks the Captain of the opposing side to spell a word. And so the questions and answers go on, passing alternately down each team.

(v) If the word is incorrectly spelt, the speller is 'gonged' by the gong reserved for that team, and the Chairman may pass the word back to be spelt by the other team. This is a matter, however, which must be left to the discretion of the Chairman. If,

for example, a word like 'receive' is incorrectly spelt, the Chairman should give the correct spelling, and pass on to another word. On the other hand, a word like 'Psychiatry,' which offers several possibilities for mistakes, might be passed on to the other team.

(vi) At the end of each round, *i.e.*, when each member of each team has spelt—or tried to spell—a word, the scores are announced.

Spelling-bees should not be too long. A period of three-quarters of an hour is ample, and during this time two teams of seven members each should be able to have five rounds at least. It is advisable to fix a time limit before starting, and the Chairman, with his eye on the clock, can decide the number of rounds.

There are two matters which Chairmen should remember:

(i) They should see that the list of words to be spelt contains more words than they are likely to require.

(ii) They should go through this list carefully beforehand and make sure that they themselves can pronounce clearly and correctly all the words. This should be unnecessary advice, but one has heard adults getting into difficulties over this point.

CHAPTER XIII

# A PERMANENT RECORD

THE minutes of the School Literary and Debating Society form, or should form, a permanent record, but there is another possibility, though it should be understood that this does not take the place of minutes. There is probably no school to-day which does not produce a magazine periodically; there are few schools whose Literary and Debating Societies produce a magazine. But there are some. The value of such a publication is evident, though the difficulties involved in its production are great.

In considering such a magazine, one must decide what is to be its nature. A school magazine is a record of events which compose the life of the school, and by which its virility may be tested; it acts as a link between past and present pupils; and it is an outlet for some of the literary outpourings of young authors and poets. The objection may be raised that a magazine published by the Literary and Debating Society will interfere with the school magazine. There is no need for this to happen. It would be inadvisable for the Society to publish more than once every session, *i.e.*, once each year. The school magazine is published normally at least once each term.

The Society magazine will not attempt to be a record of the term's or year's happenings. It will be a record of the literary life of the school, expressed in terms of essays, letters, poems, and short stories. The 'make-up' of such a magazine is important. There must be nothing cheap or shoddy about it. It must be as attractive in externals as it is hoped to be attractive in its reading-matter. Woodcuts or lino-cuts should be used not only to show something of the artistic life of the school, but also to illustrate articles in the magazine.

The greatest difficulty that arises is that of finance. A magazine which is not to look cheap cannot *be* cheap. The inclusion of woodcuts means the making of blocks, which, though reasonable, are not cheap. Who, then, is to take the responsibility of launching such a magazine? A School Literary and Debating Society normally possesses no funds whatever. If a Society is flourishing, it cannot help being an important factor in the education given in that school. It is for the school authorities, therefore, to encourage by every means in its power. One means is the shouldering of the initial burden of the magazine. In actual fact, it may well be found that even on the first edition there is no financial loss, but one must, nevertheless, be prepared for it. Success depends largely upon the Society itself, and, in particular, upon the Committee. In the school itself the magazine should be widely

and tastefully advertised. The fact that such a magazine is shortly to appear should be made known to the Old Pupils' Association, and, where it exists, to the Parents' Association. A useful source of revenue is, of course, advertisements. One feels that these would be better omitted from such a magazine as the one we are considering, but there is really no reason why they should not be included, and if they are going to make the difference between having, or not having, a magazine, then by all means let us have the advertisements.

It is not too optimistic to expect that an average-sized school to-day could sell three hundred copies. Such a quantity of magazines (octavo size) of thirty to forty pages, printed on good paper and containing three or four full-page woodcuts will cost about £15. If three hundred copies are sold at one shilling per copy, the cost is covered! And there is still the possible revenue from advertisements.

The magazine will be edited and managed by the Committee of the Literary and Debating Society, who will obtain useful experience in criticizing others' work. There are schools to-day which possess their own printing presses. One can only hope that such schools do already publish, not only a school magazine, but also a literary magazine.

## CHAPTER XIV

# GENERAL NOTES

THE following notes are reminders and warnings, based on actual experience:

(i) All speakers in any type of meeting (except, of course, Mock Trials and other dramatic affairs) must address the Chair. The normal mode of address will be: "Mr Chairman (or Speaker), (Ladies and) Gentlemen ." All members should be addressed as 'Mr' or 'Miss.' Such address amuses at first, but boys and girls quickly get used to it, and it helps to add dignity to the proceedings.

(ii) Reading of minutes. The first duty of the Chairman or Speaker—at any meeting of the Society—is to call upon the Secretary to read the minutes of the previous meeting. Should it happen that the Secretary has forgotten to write them up, one might begin, perhaps, to wonder whether the right man had been chosen as Secretary! Such things do happen, though!

(iii) It should not be necessary for the Chairman or Speaker to call for silence at the beginning of a meeting. His entry is usually

the signal that the meeting is about to begin. It does not matter whether the Chairman is a member of the staff or a boy—the rule holds good in either case. When a master has to create some semblance of order in a Literary and Debating Society there must be something seriously wrong somewhere.

(iv) Committee-meetings. These should be conducted on strictly business lines. The Speaker or Chairman will occupy the chair; the rest of the Committee-members will sit, preferably at a table. They will not sprawl about in strange inert attitudes! An agenda should be drawn up in advance by the Secretary, and this should be adhered to.

(v) Punctuality is insisted upon in school. It should also be insisted upon in out-of-school activities—not, of course, by means of punishments for offenders, but by careful unobtrusive observance on the part of the Committee and older members of the Society. If a meeting of the Literary and Debating Society is announced to begin at 4.15 P.M., it should begin at that hour, and not five minutes later. The Speaker should insist on the door being closed at the appointed time.

(vi) Rearrangement of programmes. During one term, I remember, our programme had

to be altered considerably—not all at once, but as the term proceeded. This was due to a variety of causes—sickness, examinations, etc. But the fact that it was so was unfortunate, for the members themselves became unsettled. The meetings had an unsettled atmosphere. As has been said before, programmes should be arranged a term in advance. As far as possible, they should not be subsequently altered.

(vii) Homework. In day-schools the complaint is sometimes brought forward by members of the staff that homework is affected by meetings of the Literary and Debating Society, and by pupils that they cannot do homework and attend the Society's meetings. Surely this is one of the occasions when homework might justifiably be lightened? It is sometimes possible to arrange that all the forms attending the Society should have an English homework on the day of the meeting (which is, of course, a certain fixed day of the week). Most English teachers would be only too glad to regard the experience and knowledge gained in such a meeting as the homework for that night. The drawback about such a scheme is that there will be some pupils who will be glad of a free half-hour. They will neither do homework nor attend the meeting. But there is something

wrong when a boy or girl *cannot* attend a meeting of a school society because of the demands of homework. Schools, however, can only settle this matter for themselves, according to their individual peculiarities and routine.

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